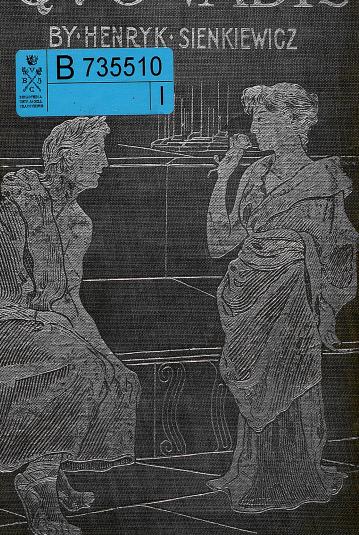
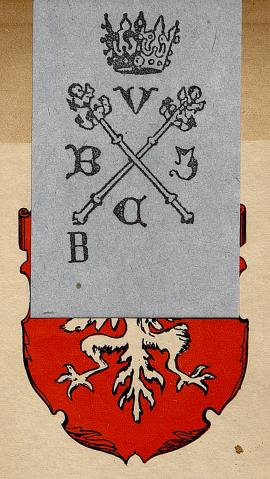
# BY. HENRYK. SIENKIEWICZ B 735510





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# **QUO VADIS**

# A TALE OF THE TIME OF NERO

BY

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# **QUO VADIS.**

# PART I.

### CHAPTER I.

Petronius awoke about noon, greatly wearied, as usual. The previous day he attended Nero's feast, which continued late into the night. For some time his health had been considerably impaired. He himself stated that he awoke in the morning greatly stupefied and without the power of collecting his thoughts. The morning bath, however, and the careful massage of his body by skilled slaves roused his sluggish blood, refreshed him, and revived his failing strength. When he left the last portion of the bath, the elfeothesium, he appeared as one risen from the dead. His eyes sparkled with wit and merriment. He became so rejuvenated, animated and vivacious, that even Otho himself could not equal him. His sobriquet—arbiter elegantiarum (the arbiter of elegance)—was well deserved.

Seldom did he frequent the public baths, and only when some rhetor was announced to be present, who had excited general admiration and formed the subject of common gossip of the city, or when in the ephebias there happened exceptionally interesting combats, did he attend. lie had in his "insula" private baths, which the famous contemporary of Severus, Celer, enlarged, rebuilt and beautified with such exquisite taste that Nero himself admitted their superiority over those of Caesar, although the imperial baths were larger,

incomparably finer and more elaborate!}7 equipped.

After the nocturnal feast, at which he became wearied by the buffooneries of Vatinius, he engaged with Nero, Lucan and Seneca in an argument as to whether woman possessed a soul. Rising late he, in accordance with his usual custom, used the baths. Two muscular balneatores placed him on a cypress table covered with snow white Egyptian linen. Moistening their hands with perfumed oil, they rubbed his shapely body, while with closed eyes he waited until the vapors of the room and the warmth of the hands pressing upon his body bad driven away all feeling of fatigue,

After a certain time lie opened his eyes and spoke. He inquired about the weather, and whether the gems which the jeweler Idomeneus had agreed to send to him that particular day for examination had come. He was informed that the weather was balmy, with a light breeze blowing from the Alban hills, and that the gems had not been received. Petronius again closed his eyes and commanded that he be borne into the tepidarium, when from behind the curtain the nomenclátor peered in, announcing that Marcus Vinicius, who had recently arrived from Asia Minor, had called to see him.

Petronius ordered that his guest be admitted to the tepidarium, to which he himself was borne. Vinicius was the son of his eldest sister, who had married Marcus Vinicius, a consul during the reign of Tiberius. Lately the young man had been serving under Corbulo against the Parthians, and at the close of the war had returned to Rome. As Marcus was a handsome and athletic youth, who could confine his dissipations within proper bounds—a trait which Petronius admired above everything else—the latter felt for him a certain weakness bordering upon attachment.

"My greeting to Petronius," said the young man, as he entered the room with an elastic step. > 1 May all the gods endow thee with their blessings, especially Asklepios and Kypris, for under their dual care no evil can befall thee."

"Welcome to Rome, and may thy rest after war be sweet," replied Petronius, extending his hand from a sheet

of soft karbas texture in which he was covered.

'1 What is new in Armenia? When you were in Asia did

you chance to visit Bithynia?"

Petronius at one time had been the proconsul of Bithynia, and what is more strange he had ruled with energy and exemplary justice. This formed a wonderful contrast in the character of a person so noted for effeminacy and love of pleasure. Therefore, he was especially fond of recalling those days, as it was proof of what he had been and what he was able to accomplish when he so desired.

"I happened to be in Heraklea," answered Vinicius,

"having been sent there by Corbulo for reinforcements."

"Heraklea! Ah, I knew there a certain maiden from Colchis, for whom I would gladly exchange all the local divorcees, not excluding Poppea. However, that is ancient

history. Tell me, what can be learned from the Parthian frontier? These Vologeses, Tiridates, Tigranes, and all that tribe of barbarians, who, as young Arulenus asserts, go on all fours at home, but here pretend to be human beings, greatly weary me. But now they form the only subject of conversation, because it is not safe to speak of aught else."

"The war is faring badly. Were it not for Corbulo it

might have ended in defeat."

'I Corbulo! By Bacchus, a real man-god, a veritable 'Mars, and at the same time impetuous, sincere and dull, I love, him for the reason that Nero fears him."

"Corbulo is no fool."

"Perhaps thou art right. After all, .it does not matter much; folly, as Pyrrho says, is in no respect worse than wisdom, and does not differ from it."

Vinicius proceeded to speak of the war, but seeing that Petronius had closed his eyes and that his uncle's countenance appeared tired and amaciated, he abruptly changed the subject of conversation and anxiously asked about his health.

"His health! No, he was far from being well. He certainly was not so badly off as young Sissena, whose sensibilities were dulled to such a degree that in the morning he would ask when brought into the bath, <sup>1</sup> Am I sitting? 'He really did not feel well. Vinicius had commended him to the patronage of Asklepios and Kypris. But he, Petronius, had no confidence in Asklepios. It was not even certain, whose son Asklepios was,—whether of Arsinoe or Koronis. If the maternity is doubtful what can possibly be said of the fatherhood? In this age, moreover, who can be certain of his own paternity?"

Petronius hereupon laughed and said:

' Two years ago I sent to Epidaurus three dozen live cocks and a golden goblet. Dost thou know why? I said to niyself, 'This may or may not help me. I cannot do any harm.' I reasoned that though people-make offerings to the deities, they believe as I do, all with the exception of the mule driver, who can be hired by travelers at the Porta Capena. Besides, Asklepio's, I had an experience last year with some of his disciples, when I suffered from pains in the bladder. They prescribed their usual quackeries. I knew they were rogues. However, I said to myself: "The

world ig founded oil fraud. Life is a delusion, ag is the soul also. All that is necessary is to have sufficient judgment, to distinguish between pleasant and disagreeable delusions. In my hypocaustum, I order my slaves to burn cedar wood sprinkled with ambergris, because in this life I prefer perfumes to stenches. As for Kypris, whom thou has recommended to me, I experienced enough of her tutelage when I suffered shooting pains in my right foot. After all she is a passable goddess. I presume sooner or later, thou wilt sacrifice at her altar white doves."

Aye," answered Vinicius, "The Parthian shafts did not touch me, but Cupid's arrow pierced me unexpectedly,

within a few stadia of the gates of this city."

"By the white knees of the Graces, thou shalt relate to me this whole affair at thy leisure,"

"I have come purposely to obtain thy advice," answered « Marcus.

At this moment the epilatores entered the room and took charge of Petronius. Marcus, at the latter's invitation to bathe, cast aside his tunic and plunged into the tepid water.

"Ah, I have forgotten to ask thee whether thy love is requited," said Petronius, admiring the body of Marcus, which seemed so finely proportioned that it appeared as if chiseled from marble. "If Lysippos had only seen thee, thou wouldst now be adorning the gates leading to the Palatine, as a statue of young Hercules."

The youth with a gratified smile dipped deeper in the bath and splashed the warm water upon a mosaic, which represented Hera, at the moment, when she implored Morpheus to lull Zeus to sleep. Petronius watched him with

the pleased eye of an artist.

When Vinicius had finished and in turn submitted himself to the care of the epilatores, the reader entered with a bronze tube at his breast, im which were rolls of papyrus.

"Barest thou to hear?" asked Petronius.

"If it is thy own. composition, willingly," answered Vinicius. "If not I would prefer to chat with thee. Poets,

nowadays, waylay people at every street corner."

"Quite right. One cannot pass any shrine, bath, library or book-shop without seeing a poet gesticulating like an ape. When Agrippa returned from the East he mistook them for lunatics. Such are the present times. Caesar writes

verses, so everyone must follow his example. It is not tolerated, however, to' write better verses than Caesar. For this reason I have slight fears for Lucan. But I only write prose, for which I do not seek praise; neither do I desire to inflict it upon others. The lector was to read to us the codicilli of the unfortunate Fabricius."

"Why unfortunate?"

'I Because advised to tarry in Odyssa and not return to his native hearth until new instructions were received." His Odyssey is lighter'to him than to Ulysses, because his wife is no Penelope. I need not say to thee, that he acted stupidly. But here, in considering such matters, no one looks below the surface. It must be a wretched and tedious book, which people begin to read with ardor, only when the author is exiled. Now from all sides we hear, 'Scandala! Scandala! It may be that Veiento imagined and exaggerated somethings, both who thoroughly know the city, its men and women, tell thee that all is paler than reality. However, everyone seeks in the work, his own, portrait With trepidation; that of his acquaintances with delight. In the book store of Avirnus a hundred scribes are copying the book from dictation and the demand steadily increases."

"Are thy doings therein recorded?" "They are, but Veiento's report is far from true, since I am at the same time, much worse and less stupid than he has represented me. Seest thou that we have long since lost the sense of determining what is worthy and what is undeserving, and to tell the truth, to me it seems there is no difference, although Seneca, Musonius and Trasca pretend to see one. To me it is all alike. By Hercules! I speak as I think. However, I feel this superiority: I know what is ugly and what is beautiful; and this, for instance, our Bronzebeard poet, chariot-

eer, singer and buffoon does not understand."

"I am sorry for Fabricius. He is a splendid companion."

Self-love ruined him. Everyone suspected him. No one had positive proof. But he could not restrain himself, and under the pledge of secrecy divulged it all. Didst thou hear the hist >ry of Rufinus?"

"Nay."

"Then let us go to the frigidarium, where, while we are cooling ourselves I will tell thee the story."

They sauntered into the frigidarium, in the center of

which a light rose-colored fountain played and filled the room with the perfume of violets. There they sat in velvet covered niches and began to cool themselves. For awhile silence reigned. Vinicius soon became absorbed with the bronze figure of a fawn, which was reclining on the arm of a nymph, and seeking eagerly her lips to kiss.

"He is right," he exclaimed, nodding at the figure. "In

life there is nothing more precious."

"To a certain degree—yes. But thou lovest war, which I hate, because under the tents our finger nails break and cease to be rosy. For that matter everyone has his own liking. Bronzebeard loves songs, especially his own,—old Scaurus, his Corinthian vase, which at night is placed at his bedside and upon which he showers kisses, when he cannot sleep. Already he has kissed the edges off. Tell me, dost thou not write verses?"

"No, I have not composed a single hexameter."

"And dost thou not play on the lute, and sing?"

"Nay."

"Nor drive a chariot?"

" Once I entered the race in Antioch, but was unsuccessful."

<sup>11</sup> Then my mind as to thee is at rest. To what faction dost thou belong in the hippodrome?"

" To the Greens."

Now since thou hast large estates, I am perfectly at ease, though thou art not so rich as Pallas or Seneca. For seest thou that now with us, it is well to write verses, sing with the accompaniment of the lute, recite and race in the circus, but safer far not to compose verses, nor play, nor sing, nor race in the circus. The best plan is to know how to be enraptured with what Bronzebeand does. Thou art a handsome youth and thy only danger is that Poppaea may fall in love with thee. Satiety she has had through her two husbands, and with the third seeks something else. Knowest thou that that stupid Otho still loves her to distraction? He wanders over the hills of Spain and sighs. He has so far forgotten his former habits and the care of his person, that three hours a day suffice for the dressing of his hair. Who could have expected this—especially fi'om Otho."

"I understand," replied Vinicius, "but in his place,

I should have done otherwise."

"And what, I pray?"

"I should have formed a devoted legion of mountaineers.

Those Iberians are sturdy soldiers."

"Vinicius! Vinicius! 1 am impelled to tell thee the truth. Thou would'st not have been able. Know'st why? Those are things which can be performed, but of which it is not safe to speak even qualifiedly. As for me, I would, if putin his place, faugh at Poppaea, laugh at Bronzebeard, and form a Legion not of Iberian men, but of Iberian women. Should necessity require, I would write epigrams, which, however, I would not show to anyone, like that poor Rufinus."

"Thou didst intend to relate to me his history"

"I will tell thee in the annointmg room."

But in the annointing room the attention of Vinicius was directed to other matters, particularly, thebewitching femaie slaves who attended the bathers. Two of them, negresses, resembling imposing statues of ebony, began to annoint their bodies, with delicate Arabian perfumes, while the Phrygians, experts in hair dressing, held in their soft and pliant hands, highly polished Steel mirrors and combs. Two Grecian maidens from Kos, reminding one of divinities, waited like patient vestals, until the time would come for the putting of graceful folds in the togas of the lords.

" By the cloud-bursting Zeus," exclaimed Marcus Vini-

cius, "thou hast a great choice."

"I prefer choice to numbers," answered Petronius, "My whole household does not exceed four hundred heads, but I presume for personal needs no one but an upstart requires a greater number."

"Fairer forms, Bronzebeard himself does not possess"

said Vinicius distending his nostrils.

To this Petronius replied with a certain amiable indifference.

"Thou art my relative, I am neither as hard-hearted as Barsus, nor as pedantic as Aulus Plautius."

When Vinicius heard the last-named he, for the moment, forgot the maidens from Kos, and raising his head with ani-

mation, asked:

11 How did Aulus Plautius occur to thy mind? Dost thou not know that I, having dislocated my arm near the city, passed a few weeks at his home? It fortunately happened that Plautius was passing at the moment of the accident,

and seeing that I suffered greatly, took me to his house, where his slave, the physician Merion, cured me. It was in reference to this I wished to speak with thee."

"Wherefore? Didst thou perchance fall in love with Pomponia? In such case I pity thee. She is not young, and is very virtuous. I cannot imagine a worse combina-

tion than that. Brr!"

"Not with Pomponia—eheu," exclaimed Vinicius, emphatically.

"With whom then?"

" As if I knew with whom ! I do not know for a certainty whether her name is Lygia or Callina. In the household she is called Lygia, because she comes from the Lygian nation. She also bears the barbarian name of Callina. A strange house is this of Plautius; crowded, but as quiet as the groves of Subiacym. For a number of days I was not aware that a divinity dwelt there. But once at daylight I beheld her as she was bathing in the garden fountain. I swear to thee, by the foam from which Aphrodite sprang, that the rays of dawn passed through her body. I believe that when the sun would arise she would disappear in light, as does the morning star. About the same hour I beheld her twice again, and from that time I have known no peace; known no other desires; nor do I care to know what the city give me. I want no women, no gold, no Corinthian bronze, amber pearls, wine, feasts—only Lygia. I tell thee truly, Petronius, that I yearn for her as did that god of dream depicted in the mosiacs of your tepidarium for Paisythea. I yearn whole nights and days."

"If she be a slave, buy her."

"She is not a slave."

"What then? A freed woman of Plautius?"

" Never having been a slave, she could not have been a freed woman."

"Then who is she?"

"I do not know; a king's daughter, or something of the kind."

"Thou dost really interest me, Vinicius."

"If thou carest to hear me, I will satisfy thy curiosity. The history is not long. Thou, perhaps, may have known, personally, Vannius, the King of theSuevi, who, having been banished from his native land, passed a long time in Borne,

and even distinguished himself for his great luck at dice and superb driving. Drusus put him again on the throne. Vannius was in fact a strong character. At first he ruled well and waged war successfully. Later, however, he began to swindle, not only his neighbors, but also his own Suevi. Two of his nephews, Vangio and Sido, the sons of Vibilius, the king of the Hermunduri, determined to force him to again return to Rome—to try his luck at dice."

"I remember it well. It was during the recent Claudian

"Yes, a war broke out Vannius sought the aid of the Yazygi, his beloved nephews summoned the Lygians, who having heard of the fabulous riches of Vannius, and deluded with the hope of rich booty, came in such, swarms that the Caesar, Claudius, himself, began to fear for the safety of his boundaries. Claudius did not care to interfere in the war of the barbarians. He wrote, however, to Atelius Hister, who commanded the trans-Danubian legions, to watch closely the course of the war, and not to allow any disturbance of our possessions. Hister demanded from the Lygians a solemn compact that they would leave our territories inviolate. To this they not only agreed but gave hostages, among whom were found the wife and daughter of their leader. Thou art undoubtedly aware that the barbarians take their wives and children with them to war. My Lygia is a daughter of that leader."

"Whence didst thou learn this?"

" Aulus Plautius, himself, told me. The Lygians did not cross the frontier. The barbarians come and disappear as the storm. So disappeared the Lygians with the horns of wild bulls on their heads. They completely routed the Vanniusian Suevi, but their own king fell. After which they departed with their plunder, and left their hostages in the hands of Hister. The mother soon died. Hister, not knowing what to do with the child, sent her to the governor of all Germany, Pomponius. After the close of the war with the Catti, he returned to Rome, when, as thou knowest, Claudius -allowed him to have a triumphal entry. The maiden at that time walked after the chariot of the conqueror. After the close of the ceremonies, as a hostage Could not be treated as a captive, Pomponius, in his turn, was at a loss as to what to do. Finally he placed her with

his sister, Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Plautius. In that house, where everything from the master to tile poultry in the hennery is virtuous, this girl grew as virtuous as Graecina herself, and so beautiful that even Poppea at her side would look like an autumn fig beside an apple from the Hesperides."
"Well?"

I repeat to thee that from the moment I saw her at the fountain, when the sun rays passed through her body, I at once fell distractedly in love."

1 'She then is as transparent as a lamprey or young sardine?"

"Jest not, Petronius. If thou art misled by the freedom, with which I speak of my passion, know that the brightest garment often hides the deepest wounds. I must tell thee that returning from Asia I passed a night in the temple of Mopsus in order to have a prophetic dream. Mopsus, himself, appeared in a dream and foretold that in my

life a great change would take place through love."

"I have heard that Pliny has said that he did not believe in the Gods, but believed in dreams, and perhaps he is right. My jests do not prevent me sometimes from thinking that there is really only one divinity, which is eternal, omnipotent and creative. Venus Genitrix—she affiliates souls, unites bodies and everything else. Eros brought the world out of chaos. Whether he has done, the work well, but that is another matter. We must acknowledge his power, though we are not at liberty to bless it."

"Ah, Petronius, dis easier in this world to philosophize,

than to give good advice."

"Tell me what thou really most desirest?"

"I want Lygia. I wish that these arms of mine, which at present embrace only the air, could encircle her and draw her to my bosom. I wish to breathe with her breath. Were she only a slave, I would give to Aulus for her a hundred girls with feet whitened with lime as a sign that they were offered for sale for the first time. I want to keep her in my home until this head of mine shall be as white as the Summit of Soracte in winter.

"She is not a slave. Nevertheless she belongs to the household of Plautius. As she is a deserted child, she may be regarded as an alumna, Plautius could yield Ifer to you

if he so desired.."

"Thou evidently dost not know Pomponia Graecina. Were she their own child they could not have become more attached to her."

' Pomponia I know—a veritable cypress. If she were not the spouse of Aulus well might she serve as a professional mourner. Since the death of Julius she has not discarded her dark robes, and looks as if, during life, she were walking over meadows overgrown with asphodels. Besides she is a one-man woman. So among our four and five-times divorces, she may be considered a veritable Phoenix. But hast thou heard that lately in Upper Egypt a Phoenix was hatched?—something which in truth does occur not oftener than once in five hundred years."

"Petronius! Petronius 1 Of the Phoenix we will speak

at another time."

"Something I will tell thee, my Marcus. I know Aulus Plautius, who, although he condemns my mode of life, has for me a certain weakness. Perhaps he respects, more than others, since he knows I am no informer like, for instance, Domitius Afer, Tigellinus, and that rabble of friends of Ahenobarbus. I do not pretend to be a stoic. Often, however, have I been shocked at the behavior of Nero, at which Seneca and Burrus winked. If thou thinkst I can win favor for thee with Aulus, I am at thy command."

<sup>11</sup>1 believe thou canst. Thou hast influence with him; besides, they mind is so fertile in resources. If thou wouldst

examine the field and speak with Plautius."

"Thou hast too exalted an idea of my influence and wit. But if thou carest, I will speak with Plautius as soon as they return to Rome."

"They have returned, two days ago."

' Well, then, let us go to the triclinium, where a breakfast awaits us. After which, having gained new strength, we will command that we be carried to Plautius."

1 'Thou wert always dear to me, "exclaimed Vinicius, with animation, "but now I will cause to be placed among my household deities thy statue—as beautiful as this one—

and to it will I make offerings."

Having said this, he turned towards the row of statues which adorned an entire wall of the perfumed chamber, and pointing his hand at the statue of Petronius, which represented him as Hermes, with a staff in his hand, added—

"By the light of Ilelios, if the 'divine' Alexander were like thee—who can be surprised at Helen?"

This he said with as much sincerity as flattery. Petronius, although older and less athletic than Vinicius, was even handsomer than the latter.

The ladies of Rome admired not only his subtle mind and refined taste, which won for him the name of <sup>1</sup> ' arbiter of elegance," but also his form. This admiration, could also be seen on the countenances of the maidens from Kos who arranged the folds of his toga. One of them, called Eunice, loved him secretly, and gazed upon him with meekness and rapture.

But he did not pay any attention to her. He only smiled at Vinicius, and began answering him by repeating the quo-

tation of Seneca about women: Animal impudens, etc.

After which, having placed his hand upon Vinicius' shoulder, he led him to the triclinium.

In the unctorium the two Grecian maids, the Phrygians and the Negresses began to put away the vessels with perfumes. At this moment, beyond the curtains of the frigidarium, appeared the heads of the balneatores, and the soft "past" resounded through the apartments. At this call one of the Grecian maids, the Phrygians and the two Negresses stepped lively, and at the winking of the eye disappeared behind the curtain. In the baths the hour of license began, which the inspector did not prohibit, as he himself often took part in the orgies. Although Petronius had an inkling of what was taking place, as a reasonable person who did not wish to inflict punishment he gazed at the matter through his fingers.

In the unctorium Eunice alone remained. For awhile she listened to the distant voices and laughter coming from the laconicum. Afterwards, lifting the table inlaid with amber and ivory upon -which, a moment before, reposed

Petronius^ she placed it before the statue of Petronius.

The unctorium was filled with sunlight, and varied hue reflected from the marble with which the walls were adorned.

Eunice stepped upon the table, and finding herself oh a level with the statue, she suddenly threw her firm around its neck. After which, brushing aside her golden tresses and pressing her warm body to the white marble, she began to cover with inflamed lips the cold features of Petronius.

#### CHAPTER II.

After a repast, which they called breakfast, and of which the two companions partook at a time when ordinary mortals had long since finished their afternoon meal, Petronius suggested a light nap. According to him the hour was too early for visiting. There are, it is true, some persons who begin visiting their acquaintances at sunrise, believing the custom to be an old Roman one; but he, Petronins, regarded it as a barbaric custom. The afternoon hour was the most appropriate—not earlier than when the sun passes the temple of Jupiter Capitoline and casts oblique shadows on the Forum. The fall season was yet sultry, and most people preferred to take a siesta after eating. In the meantime it was pleasant to listen to the noise of the fountains, after taking the thousand obligatory steps to doze in the ruddy light which passed through the purple, half-closed velarium.

Vinicius conceded the justice of his words. While strolling they spoke in an indifferent manner about the latest gossip of the Palatine and the city. After a while they philosophized about life. Later Petronius retired to the cubiculum, but did not sleep long. At the expiration of half an hour he reappeared and ordered that verbena be brought-to him, which he inhaled and rubbed on his hands

and sides of his head.

"Thou wilt not believe," he exclaimed, "how this in-

vigorates and revives me. Now I am ready."

The litter was long since waiting for them. They'entered and commanded that they be borne to the home of Aulus on the Vicus Patricius. The insula of Petronius lay on the south side of the Palatine near the so-called Carinae. The nearest road, therefore, was below the Forum. But as Petronius desired to see Idomeneus, the jeweler, he directed that they be carried to the Vicus Apollinis and Forum near the Vicus Sceleratus, close by which were numerous booths of all kinds.

The powerful negroes raised the litter and started, preceded by slaves called the pedisequii. Petronius, who for a short time was silent, now raised the palm of his hand perfumed with verbena to his nostrils and seemed to be lost in thought. After a while he exclaimed: "It occurs to me that if thy rustic divinity is no slave, she could renounce the house of Plautius and be transferred to thine. Thou couldst cover her with love and surround her with wealth as I do my beloved Chrysothemis, of whom, speaking in confidence, I have had enough, as she had of me."

Marcus shook his head.

"No?" queried Petronius. "Then, in the worst case the matter would rest with Caesar. And thou canst be certain that, thanks to my influence, old Bronzebeard would decide in thy favor."

"Thou dost not know Lygia," said Vinicius.

"Permit me to ask, dost thou know her, except by sight? Didst thou speak with her? Hast thou confessed to her thy love?"

"I first beheld her at. the fountain. Afterward I twice met her. Bear in mind that during my stay in the house of Aulus I lived in a separate villa designed for guests, for, having a dislocated arm, I could not sit at the family table. It was only on the eve of the day on which I announced my departure that I met her at supper. I 'could not speak a single word to her. I had to hear Aulus and his narratives of victories won in Brittany, and afterward about the overthrow of small estates in Italy, which Lucinius Stolo sought to prevent. In truth I know not whether Aulus is able to speak of aught else. I could not extricate myself from the subject, unless I cared to hear about the effeminacy of modern times. They have cock pheasants in the hennery, but do not eat them, because they believe that every cockpheasant eaten hastens the end of the power of Rome. The second time I met her was at the garden cistern with a freshly plucked reed in her hand. She occasionally immersed the reed in the water and sprinkled the irises growing about. Gaze upon my knees. By the shield of Hercules I swear to thee they did not tremble when our legion encountered a cloud of Parthians, but they trembled at the cistern. Confused as a strippling who yet wears a bulla around his neck, I begged mercy with my eyes, and for a long while I could not utter a word."

Petronius looked at him with a certain feeling of envy.

"Fortunate one," he said. "Although life and the world should be at its worst, one thing, will always remain which is eternally good—youth."

**b**After a while he asked:

"Didst thou not speak to her?"

"Most assuredly. When I partly collected my thoughts high med her that I had just returned from Asia and ywhen near the city had dislocated my arm and had suffered Excruciating pains, but at that moment, when I was to leave -that hospitable domicile, I perceived that it was far better to suffer pain there than experience pleasure elsewhere. Better far to be ill there than enjoy health at another place.

(She listened to my words with confusion, and, with bowed head, commenced to trace with the reed something on the vellow sands, after which she raised her eyes. She glanced at the design in the sand and then on me, as if she was about to ask me some question, and then, like a hamadryad before a stupid faun, she ran away."

"She must have beautiful eyes."

' Like the sea—and I was drowned in them, as if in the sea. Believe me, that the archipelego is less blue. After awhile the little Platius came and asked about something, but I did not comprehend what he was talking about."

"Oh, Athene," exclaimed Petronius, "tear from the eyes of this boy the bandage which Eros tied. Otherwise he will break his head on the columns of the temple of Venus."

After which he turned his head to Vinicius, and said:

"Thou spring-bud on the tree of life, thou first green branch in the vineyard. Instead of taking thee to Plautius, I ought to have thee carried to the house of Gelocius, where a school is conducted for boys inexperienced for life."
"What dost thou really desire?"

"What did she trace in the sand? Was it not .the name of Amor? Or a heart pierced with a dart? Or something of the kind from which you might have inferred that Satyrs whispered into the ear of this nymph the secrets of life? How could it be possible that thou didst hot see the signs?"

"I have worn the toga much longer than thou thinkest," replied Vinicius, "and before the little Aulus approached I carefully examined the marks. Do I not know that in Greece and Rome maidens trace in the sand thoughts which their lips are unwilling to express. Guess what she traced."

"If something else beside what I have suggested, then I

cannot conjecture."

"A fish."

"What sayest thou?"

"I tell thee a fish. What could that mean but that co-/ blood flows through her veins? I know not, but thou, wli-b has called me the spring bud on the tree of life, certainly can better understand that sign."

"Beloved, consult Plinius better. He is acquainted with fish. Had old Apicius loved, he perhaps could enlighten thee somewhat, as during his lifetime he had eaten more fish than can be found at one time in the Bay of Naples."

Further conversation was drowned by the noises of the i populace which thronged the crowded thoroughfare through • which they were carried. From the Vicus Appolinis they wended their way to the Forum Romanum, where on fair j days, the idle multitude assembled before the setting of the sun to stroll leisurely among the columns to relate and learn news of the hour, to see noted people carried in the litters. and finally to inspect the shops of jewelers, the book stores, the places in which moneys were exchanged, and the shops for the sale of silks, bronzes and other merchandise, which were numerous in the market-place opposite the Capitol. One-half the Forum, near the walls of the historic structure, was covered with shade, while the columns erected above the temple seemed golden in the luster of the sun and the azure sky. Those lying lower cast their lengthened shadows upon the marble pavement, and so numerous were they that the eyes seemed lost among them as in a forest. Those edifices and columns appeared to crowd each other. Rising one above the other, running to the right and left, climbing the hills, they appeared to cling to the walls of the Capitol. Or others, differing one from another, as great and small, thick and thin, golden and silvery tree trunks blooming under the architraves with flowers of the alanthus, now capped with Ionic corners, now finished with a simple Doric quadrangle. Above this forest glistened colored triglyphs; from the tympans the sculptured images of gods leaned forth from the summit, the golden-winged quadrigae seemed anxious to fly into the azure sky and poise peacefully over this city of temples. To the midst of the market place and at the edges streams of humanity flowed, the crowds passed under the arches of thé basilica of Julius Cæsar, swarms. sat on »he steps of Castor and Pollux and surged about the

Praple of Vesta, resembling on a marble background pied-hued butterflies and beetles. From above, on the cenormous stairways leading from the side of the temple radicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus new waves were saliming; at the rostrum some chance orators could be heard, teind here and there resounded the cries of venders selling i fruit, wine, or water mixed with the juice of figs, of mountebanks extolling miraculous remedies, of soothsayers divining i hidden treasures, and interpreters of dreams. In other places, amidst this buzz of talk and outcries were blended the sounds of the sistra, the Egyptian sambuké and Grecian i flute. Elsewhere the sick, pious and distressed carried offerings to the temple.

Amid the assembled multitude greedy for the grain

on the stone flags, flocks of pigeons could be seen, reminding one of movable, speckled and dark spots, now flying upward noisily beating the air with their wings, and again descending to the places left vacant by the throng. From time to time the crowd dispersed before litters in which could be seen painted faces of women or the heads of senators and warriors, rigid and almost lifeless. The polyglot populace repeated their names and nicknames, sometimes sneeringly and sometimes with laudation. Among this disordered crowd, at times, soldiers with measured tread and watches for the preservation of order on the streets, pressed through. The Greek language could be heard as frequently as the Latin.

Vinicius, who for a long time had not been in the city, gazed upon this bustling multitude with certain interest and this "Forum Romanum," which while ruling the world appeared at the same time to be flooded by it. Petronius, guessing the thoughts of his companion, called it the 11 nest of Ouirites. without the Quirites." In reality, the local element was completely submerged in that multitude which was composed of al! races and nations. Here were the Ethiopians, the light-haired men from the far North, Britons, Gauls and Germans, sloping-eyed inhabitants of Sericum; men beyond the Euphrates and from the Indus, with beards dyed like the color of brick'; Syrians from the banks of the Grontes with dark and pleasant eyes; the dwellers of the Arabian deserts, dried as a bone; Jews with sunken breasts; Egyptians with perpetual cold smiles on their faces; Numidians and Africans; Greeks from Hellas, who equally with

the Romans ruled the city, Slit ruled it by their learning, wisdom and knavery; Greeks from the Islands, Asia Mini Egypt, Italy and Narbonic Gaul. In that multitude wely slaves with pierced ears. Nor were there lacking the fivd idle populace which Cæsar amused, fed and even clothed the free arrivals attracted to the city by the ease of livinfand the chances of fortune. Here also were the purchasable priests of Serapis with palm branches in their hand, priests of Isis to whose altars more offerings were made than to the temple of Jupiter Capitoline, and priests of Cybele, t bearing in their hands golden tassels of rice, priests of wandering duties, Eastern dancers with bright mitres on their L head selling amulets, snake charmers, Chaldean magicians, I and Anally people without any occupation whatever, who every week called at the store-houses on the Tiber for grain, 1 fought for lottery tickets in the circus, spent their nights in the ram-shackle houses in the section of the city beyond the Tiber, and on warm and sunny days under the porticos or ' in the dirty chop houses of the Subura, near the bridge of Milvian, or else before the houses of the wealthy, where from time to time the remnants of the tables of the slaves were thrown to them.

Petronius was well known to the throng. The ears of Vinicius were continually struck by the words, ' 'Hic est—'tis he." He was loved for his liberality, and his popularity increased greatly from the time when it became known that hApléaded before Cæsar, in opposition to the edict of death, issued against the entire household of the prefect Pedanius Secundus, without regard to age or sex, because one of them in desperation killed that monster. Petronius, it is true, repeated quite loudly that it was all the same to him, that he spoke to Cæsar privately as the "arbiter elegantiarum," whose aesthetic feelings revolted at such barbarous massacre, which was worthy of the Scythians but not Romans. Nevertheless, the populace, which was highly wroth over the slaughter, loved Petronius from that time.

, But he did not care for that. He remembered that this same populace loved Britannicus, whom Nero poisoned; Aggrippina, whom he commanded to be assassinated, and Octavia, who at the Pandataria 'was smothered after her veins were opened in the hot bath, and Rubelius Plautus, who was banished, and Thraseus, to whom any morn might bring a

heath summons. The affection of the populace could be regarded as a poor augary, and the sceptical Petronius at the Ntme time had his superstitions. For the multitude he en-

rtained the deepest contempt, both as an aristocrat and Esthetic. Men with the odor of boiled beans, which they Carried in the folds of their bosom, were eternally hoarse

...\_...Ind perspiring from playing mora on the street corners, and pin the peristyles, in his eyes, did not deserve to be called g'human.

Ignoring entirely the applause and the kisses thrown to him from lips, he related to Marcus the case of Pedanius, at the same time denounced the fickleness of the street rabble,

which, after having worked itself to the highest pitch of indignation over the massacre of that patrician's family, the very next day cheered Nero on his way to the temple of Jupiter Stator. Before the book-store of Avirnus he ordered the litter to be stopped, alighted therefrom, and bought an elegant manuscript, which he presented to i Vinicius.

"Thanks," said Vinicius. Then, observing the title, he asked: "Satyrican, this is something new. Whose is it?"

" Mine. However, I do not care to follow the foot-steps of Rufinius, whose history I was about to relate to thee, nor the example of Fabricius Veicnto. As no one knows anything about it, do not divulge the secret."

"Thou hast said that thou did not write verses," said Vinicius. 1 'Here I find the prose frequently interspersed

with them."

<1 When thou readest, pay attention to the feast of Trimalchion. As for verses, they have disgusted me from the time Nero took to writing epics. Vitelius, whenever he desires to relieve himself, uses a small stick of ivory which • he thrusts into his throat; others secure the same result by using a flamingo feather saturated with oil or boiled in wild thyme—for the same reason. I read the poetry of Nero, and the effect is immediate. Then I can praise them, if hot with a clear conscience at least with a clean stomach." Having said this he stopped the litter before the jeweler, Idomeneus, and after having settled for the gems, he ordered the litter to be borne straight way to the house of Aulus.

"On the road 1 will tell thee the history of an author's

gelf-love; the story of Rnflnius," he said,

But before he commenced his narrative, they had alreated turned down the Patrician road, and in a brief time reach<ot the home of Aulus. The young and strong servant opéne8' the doors leading to the ostium in which a magpie in a sus''8 pended closed cage greeted them with the word "salve.' 1\* Walking from the second vestibule, called the ostium to the atrium, Vinicius said:

' 'Didst thou notice that the door-keeper is without chains.

"What a strange house!" answered Petronius with a suppressed voice. "It may be known to thee that Pomponims
Grsecina is suspected of believing in the Eastern superstition, which is founded on the worship of some Chrestos.
appears that Crispinilla rendered her this service, as six
cannot forgive Pomponia for being content with one husband for an entire life—a one-man woman! Much easier is
it to find a half-dish of mushrooms from Noricum in Rome.
She was tried before the domestic court."

" Thou art right, it is a singular house. Later I will tell

thee what I here heard and saw."

Meanwhile they found themselves in the atrium. The Supervisor of the room, a slave, called Atriensis, sent the nomenclator to announce the guests, and at the same time servants brought them chairs and foot-stools. Petronius, who imagined that in this severe house eternal sorrow' reigned, and for this reason never called there before, glanced about with certain curiosity and with a certain feeling of gratification, because the atrium made a happy impression. Above, through the large opening, a flood of bright light poured in, breaking into thousands of rays in the water-spoilt. The square pool, with the fountain in. the center for receiving rain falling in inclement weather through the opening and called the implevicum was surrounded by anemones and lilies. Great partiality, evidently, was displayed in that house for lilies, as there were numerous tufts of them, white and red, and finally sapphire irises, whose delicate leaves were silvered by the watery sprays. Amid the watery moss concealed in the

lily-pots and amid the profusion of leaves, bronze statues representing children and water birds could be seen. In one corner was a fawn made of bronze^ extending her head, moldy from the dampness, to the water, as if about to quench her thirst, The floor of the atrium was laid with

mosaics, the walls were partly of red marble and partly of world, on which were painted fishes, birds and grillins, which allured the eye with the play of colors. The doorways to tile side rooms were adorned with tortoise shells and even ivory. Near the walls between the doorways stood the statues of the ancestors of Aulus. Everywhere peaceful plenty could be seen, far from wasteful, but noble and self-satisfied.

Petronius, who lived in unsurpassed splendor and ostentation, could not find here a single object which offended his taste, aDd had just spoken to Vinicius of his reflection, when the slave, the velarius," drew aside the curtain which separated the atrium from tablinum and from the depth of the house appeared Aulus hastening towards them. He was a man approaching the evening of life, with a head whitened with frosts, but still hale; with a face full of energy, but somewhat small, resembling to a certain degree the head of an eagle. At the same time there was depicted upon it surprise mingled with disquiet at the unexpected visit of the friend, boon companion and flatterer of Nero.

Petronius was too worldly and bright not to observe this, and after the first greetings, he informed him with his usual fluency and ease; which became him, that he merely called to express his gratitude for the kindness shown the son of his sister and that this alone was the purpose of his visit, a resolve moreover which his former acquaintance with Aulus emboldened him to make.

Aulus on his part assured him that he was a welcome guest. As for gratitude, he declared that he had just as good cause for that feeling, though undoubtedly Petronius could not surmise the reason. Somehow Petronius could not divine the cause. In vain he raised his eyes, gazed upwards, striving to recall the least service he had rendered Aulus or to any one else. He recalled none, unless it be that he intended to favor Vinicius. Some thing may have occurred of that nature, which he had done unconsciously, but only unconsciously.

"I love and prize highly Vespasian," said Aulus, "whose life you had saved, when he had the misfortune one time to fall asleep while hearing Caesar recite his verses."

"It was his great luck that he did not hearthose verses," said Petronius, "which, however, might have ended unfortu-

nately. Bronzebeard absolutely desired to send a centurion with the friendly request to open his veins."

"Thou, Petronius, however laughed him out of it."

Or pheus could charm wild animals into sleep with his songs, his triumph was as great, since he could Iull Vespasian to slumber. Ahenobarbus may be chided only on the condition that with a little criticism a great deal of flattery Be added. Our loving Augusta, Poppsea, understands this well. "Unhappy are these times," exclaimed Aulus. "I lack

two front teeth, which a stone thrown by a Briton knocked out, and for this reason my speech has a whistling sound. However, the happiest moments of my life were spent in

Brittany."

"Because victorious," interjected Vinicius.

But Petronius, fearing that the old commander might begin to narrate his experience in his ancient wars, changed the subject of conversation. He remarked that in the vicinity of Prsenesta, peasants found a lifeless wolf-whelp with two heads, the day previous to the violent storm when lightning tore off the corner of the temple of Luna, an occurrence which, considering the lateness of the fall season, was something unheard of. A certain Cotta, who told him of it, added that the priests of that temple predict from this cause the downfall of the city, or at least the ruin of a great house—a calamity which can only be averted by extraordinary sacrifices.

Aulus, who heard this, observed that these signs cannot be treated lightly; that the gods may be enraged at the limitless measure of crimes then prevailing. In this there was nothing strange, and in such cases penitential offerings were entirely appropriate.

To this Petronius replied:

"Thy house, oh, Plautius, is not large, though therein dwells a great man. Mine is too great for such a miserable owner, but equally small. If it concerns the ruin of a great one, as for instance the 'domus transitoria,' would it pay us to offer sacrifices to avert it?"

Plautius did not answer the interrogatory. This caution touched Petronius, who, although lacking the sense of distinguishing between right and wrong, never was an informer, and could be explain to with perfect sofety. He again

and could be spoken to with perfect safety. He again

'nged the subject of conversation, and commenced to vaise the residence of Plautius, together with the good (d), te which was everywhere apparent.
(d) "It.is an ancient seat," said Plautius, "in which I have

fade no changes from the day I inherited it."

After the curtain, which separated the atrium from the ablinum, was drawn aside, the whole house was open to iew, so that through the tablinum the peristyle adjoining she chamber lying beyond it, called the recus, the garden disclosed itself to them at a distance like a beautiful painting set in a dark frame. From the distance the sounds of happy, childish laughter reached the atrium.

All, General," said Petronius, "permit us to listen a little nearer to that sincere laughter, which is rarely heard

nowadays."

"Willingly," answered Plautius, rising. "It is my little Aulus and Lygia playing with a ball. As to laughter, I presume, Petronius, thy entire life is spent in it."

"Life is worth a laugh, therefore I laugh," answered

Petronius; "but here laughter has a different sound."

"Petronius," added Vinicius, " does not laugh during

the day, but rather throughout the entire night. "

Thus conversing they passed through the entire length of the house into the garden, where Lygia and little Aulus were playing with balls, which slaves, exclusively appointed for this purpose, called spheristge, gathered from the ground and handed to them. Petronius cast a quick, flying glance at Lygia, and little Aulus, seeing Vinicius, ran to greet him. Vinicius passed by, bowed before the beautiful maid, who stood with a ball in hand, her hair untied, a little out of breath, and confused. But in the triclinium garden, shaded by ivy, vines and honey-suckles, sat Pomponia Graecina. To her they went to exchange greetings. With Petronius, who, though he did not often visit the house of Plautius, she was well known, as he had met her at the house of Antistia, the daughter of Rubelius Plautus, and furthermore, in the homes of Seneca and Polion. He could not resist a certain admiration which that sad countenance inspired in him—a countenance so melancholy, yet serene, combined with the dignity of her bearing, movements and words. To such a degree did Pomponia disturb his understanding of women that this man, corrupted to the very

marrow of his bone, ancl with an assurance unequaled ®'t<sub>1</sub> Rome, not only felt for her a kind of respect, but, in <sup>lr</sup>, measure, even lost his self-confidence. And while thanRe ing her for the care she had taken of Vinicins, he ha?® unconsciously used the word "domina"—a word which, never occurred to him -when speaking, for instance, with? Calvia, Crispinilla, Scribonia, Veleria, Solina, and otherwomen of the upper world. After mutual greetings and expressing his gratitude, he commenced to complain that he saw Pomponia rarely; that he did not meet her either in the circus or the amphitheater. To which she replied calmly, placing her hand in the hand of her husband:

"We are growing old, and both love more and more

domestic quiet.

This Petronius sought to deny, but Aulus Plautius added with his whistling voice:

'1 And we feel more and more strange among the people

who even call our Roman gods with Grecian names."

' < The gods from a certain period have become mere figures of rhetoric," carelessly answered Petronius, and as Grecians have taught us rhetoric, it is much easier for me to say, for instance, Hera, than Juno."

Having said this, he directed his eyes towards Pomponia as a sign that in her presence no other divinity could occur to his mind. He then began to deny what she said about

old age.

"People age rapidly, it is true, but only those who lead a different life. Besides, there are faces which Saturn seems

to have forgotten."

Petronius spoke this with a certain, kind of sincerity, for although Pompania Grmcina passed the meridian of life, she preserved an unusual freshness of complexion, and as she had a small head and delicate countenance, notwithstanding her dark dress., stately demeanor and sadness, she

at times left an impression of a woman quite young.

In the meantime young Aulus, who, during Vinicius' stay in the house became unusually attached to him, coming nearer, begged him to play with the ball, Lygia followed the boy into the triclinium. Under the ivy, with the sunlight quivering on her face she seemed to Petronius much prettier than at the first glimpse, and reminded him of a real nymph. As he had not spoken to her up to this time he bowed his

chaad before her, and instead' of the customary words of pWeeting, he recited the words with which Ulysses greeted tasiusikaa:

"I know not whether thou art a divinity or mortal maid, But if thou art an inhabitant of this earthly vale

Blessed be thy father and mother jointly,

Blessed thy brother, etc."

Even Pomponia was pleased with the exquisite polish of this man of the world. Lygia listened, confused and blushing, not daring to raise her eyes. But by degrees, from the corners of her mouth a roguish smile began to play. On her countenance could be detected a struggle between the modesty of the maid and a desire to reply. Finally the desire mastered. Glancing suddenly at Petronius she replied to him with the words of Nausikaa, reciting it in one breath and somewhat like a memorized lesson:

" I know not who thou art, or what thy mind."

After which she turned and ran from the place like a frightened bird. It was now Petronius' turn to be astonished. He had not expected to hear Homeric verses from the lips of a maid, of whose barbaric origin he was apprised by Vinicius. He glanced with an inquiring look at Pomponia, but she could not give him a reply, as she at that moment was looking smilingly at old Aulus, in whose face pride was discernible.

The latter could not conceal his pride. In the first place he was as much attached to Lygia as to his own child; secondly, notwithstanding his ancient Roman prejudices which caused him to thunder against the Grecian language and its spread, he regarded it as the acme of social refinement. He himself never could well learn it, a fact which he Secretly mourned. He was overjoyed, that to this finished gentleman and man of letters, who was ready to regard his own house as barbarian, a reply was made in the language and verses of Homer.

<sup>1</sup> There is in this household a Grecian pedagogue, "he said, turning to Petronius, "who is instructing our boy, and to whose lessons the girl listened. Wagtail she is, but a precious one, to whom we have both become devoted."

Petronius gazed through the thick branches of ivies into the garden at the youthful trio playing ball. Vinicius cast aside his toga and in his tunic struck upwards the ball which

Lygia, standing opposite with outstretched arms each f.voiin to catch. The maid at the first glance of the eye did n a create a great impression on Petronius. She seemed somewhat slim. But from the moment he beheld het mod closely in the triclinium, he thought to himself that Auron might resemble her, and this he, as a connoisseur, under stood to be something uncommon. He adjudged ancf analyzed everything. Her face was rosy and clear, herfreslJ lips, formed for kisses, her eyes blue as the azure sea, her forehead had an alabaster whiteness, and the ringlets of her luxuriant dark hair shone with the brilliancy of amber or Corinthian bronze. The slight neck, the divine formation of 1 the shoulders, and the supple and slender posture of the body, young with the youth of May or freshly blooming i flowers. There was awakened in him the artist and lover of beauty who felt that under statute of that virgin could be written "Spring." Suddenly lie recalled Chrysothemis, and was seized with a hollow laugh. With the golden powder in her hair and blackened eye brows, she appeared to him wonderfully withered—something in the nature of a yellow tree shedding its leaves. Yet all Rome envied his possession of Chrysothemis. Then he recalled Popptea, and that celebrated Poppsea likewise seemed to him a soulless mask of wax. The Tanagrian form of this maid embodied not only "Spring" but also the radiance of Psyche, which shone through her rosy body as the flame gleams through the

"Vinicius is right," he thought. "My Chrysothemis is old,

old as Troy."

Then turning to Pomponia Graecina and pointing to the garden, he said: "Now, I understand, domina, why with two such companions thou dost prefer thy home to the feasts in the Palatine or the Circus."

'1 Aye, " she answered, turning her eyes in the direction

of little Aulus and Lygia.

The old commander began to narrate the history of the girl, and what he had heard many years before, from Atelius Hister about the Lygian nation living in the Northern darkness.

The trio finished their game and strolled on the sandy walks of the garden, resembling in the dark back ground of myrtles and cypresses, three white statues. Lygia held the hat'd of little Aulus. Having exercised enough, they sat on a 'ench near the fish pond in the center of the garden. After a while Aulus attempted to frighten the fish in the eldar water. Vinicius continued the conversation commenced during the walk. "Yes" he said in alow, quivering voice," I' had hardly cast aside my boyhood garments, when I was dispatched to the Asiatic legions. The city I did not know, nor life, nor love, I can quote from memory a little of Anacreon, and Horace, but cannot like Petronius utter verses at a time when reason becomes mute from admiration and is unable to express itself in words. When a boy I attended the school of Musonius, who said that good fortune depends on this; to desire that which the gods desire therefore it depends on our own wills. I think differently. It can only be conferred by something greater and more precious which is independent of our wills and that is Love. The gods themselves seek this good fortune, and I, oh, Lygia, who have heretofore been a stranger to love following in their footsteps, seek her who could confer upon me hap-

He became "silent and for a time nothing could be heard but the splash of water, caused by little Aulus throwingstones to frighten the fish. After a while Vinicius resumed

in a lower and more tender voice.

She heard him in alarm and astonishment, and at the same time appeared as if listening to the sounds of a Grecian flute or zither. At moments she thought that Vinicius sang to her some strange song, which trickled into her

ears, thrilled her blood, and filled her heart with faintness

and fear. It seemed that he spoke to her of something which was already within her and for which she could n',ot find an explanation. She felt that he awoke within h4r, something, which thus far slumbered and that moment, the misty dream changed into a figure more and more definite' more lovable and beautiful...

Meanwhile the sun had long since passed the Tiber and stood near the eminence of Janiculum. The still cypresses were, covered by a ruddy light with which the whole atmosphere was permeated. Lygia raised on Vinicius lier blue eyes, as if awakened from a dream—and in that evening light suddenly bending over her with prayer quivering in his eyes, he appeared to her more beautiful than all men, than all the Grecian and Roman gods whose statues could be seen on the pediments of the temple. Gently taking her hand he asked:

"Knowest thou, Lygia why I so speak to thee?"

"No," she w'hispered, so low that Vinicius hardly heard

But he did not believe her and seizing her hand more tightly, he would have drawn her to his heart, beating like a hammer under the influence of desire aroused by this wonderful maid and would have spoken burning words, had not old Aulus appeared on the pathway covered with an awning of myrtle. On coming nearer he said:

11 The sun has set, therefore beware of the evening cool-

ness. Jest not with Libitina.

"No," said Vinicius, "I had not vet put on my toga and did not feel the coolness."

"See! hardly one half of the sun's shield can be seen beyond the hill," said the old warrior, "Sweet is that climate of Sicily, where the populace assembles evenings on the pub- lie square to sing farewell choruses to setting Phoebus."

And forgetting that a moment before he had warned them against Libitina, he proceeded to speak to them of Sicily where he had an estate and large farm, which he loved. He mentioned also that it often occurred to him to remove to Sicily and there quietly end his days. ' 'He experiences enough frost he thought whose head was by many winters whitened. At present the leaves have not fallen from the trees, and the heavens smile kindly over the city, but when vineyards

ne half-yellow, when the snow falls upon the Alban, and the gods visit Campania with penetrating winds, who is but I might transfer my whole household at quantity seat?"

thou a wish to leave Rome, Plautius? " asked with sudden alarm.

at desire I have had a long time," answered Aulus, is safer and more peaceful there." And again he I to praise his orchards, his stables and his home con-

d in the green; and the hills covered with thyme and sr-grass, among which swarmed buzzing bees. But iius heeded not this bucolic rhapsody. He thought that he might lose Lygia. He looked in the director Petronius, as if from him alone could he obtain

ca>uccor.

IJ. Meanwhile, Petronius, sitting near Pomponia, was admir ing the setting sun, the garden and people at the pond, IT Their white garments on the dark background shone like gold in the evening rays on the sky, the evening light hassumed purple and violet hues and seemed to change like

opal. A portion of the heavens became lily-colored. The 0' dark silhouettes of the cypresses were much plainer than during the bright day. Among the people, the trees and

the entire garden an evening calm prevailed.

s. Petronius was impressed with this calm and was particu8. larly struck with the quietude of the people. In the faces
of Pomponia, old Aulus, their son and Lygia, there was
something which he had not discerned in those countenances
which he met every day or rather during the nights. A certain light, a certain calm and peace flowed through the lives
of all who dwelt there. With certain amazement he thought
that here existed a beauty and sweetness which he who was
perpetually seeking beauty and sweetness did not know.

Vinicius, Lygia and little Aulus. Before they arrived P

"And thou believest in the gods, Pomponia?"

"I believe in a God who is one, just and omnipote answered the wife of Aulus Plautius.

## CHAPTER III.

"She believes in a God, who is one, almighty ancl just, repeated Petronius, the moment he found himself again wit Vinicius in the litter. "If her god is almighty, then h disposes of life and death; if just, then he justly visits ry? with death. Why then does Pomponia wear mourning fell: Julius? By grieving for Julius she censures her God. to must repeat this reasoning to our Bronzebeard monkeyrs I believe that in dialectics I can equal Socrates. As for wo-, man, I agree each one possesses three or four souls, but. none have a reasoning one. Let Pomponia debate with S<m-< eca on Cornutus as to whom her great Logos is. Let tl-em ^ invoke the shades of Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zenc mid'i Plato, who are as weary in those Cimmerian regions as a green finch in a cage. I wished to converse with L Plautius of something else. By the sacred belly of the sg Egyptian Isis! Had I plainly told them the object of our visit I presume that that virtue of theirs would have, re sounded like a bronze shield when struck with a club. I did not dare to tell! Wilt thou believe it, Vinic. -.s, It not dare. Peacocks are beautiful birds, but their shri>" disagreeable. I feared a shriek. I must, howove: mend thy choice. A veritable rosy-fingered Aurora. Knowest thou of what she reminded me?—'Spiing. our Italian spring, where here and there an apple tree is covered with blossoms, and the olive groves decay as they! heretofore decayed, but that spring which I saw once ii Helvetia—young, fresh and bright green. By the pal moon, I am not astonished at thee. Know, however, this thou lovest a Diana, and that Aulus and Pomponia are readf to tear thee, as once the hounds tore Actaeon."

Vinicius, not raising his head for a time, remained silent. After awhile, with a voice choking with emotion, he said: I

becc 'I desired her before, now I desire her more. When I Hillight her hand I was consuming with passion. I must theive her. Were I Zeus I would surround her with a cloud to the surrounded Io, or I would fall on her as rain fell on

huafe. I wish to kiss her lips until they become sore. I Viislilto hear her scream in mj<sup>r</sup> arms. I wish to kill Aulus and Pomponia and abduct her and carry her in my arms to 'ay house. I will not sleep to-night. I shall order a slave 'to be flogged, and shall listen to his groans—"

"Quiet thyself," said Petronius. "Thou hast the cravings

of a carpenter from the Subura."

"It is all the same to me. Her I must have. I came to thee for assistance, but if thou canst not give it, I will find it myself. Aulus regards Lygia as a daughter; how can I look upon her as a slave? As there is no other way, let her adorn my home, let her' anoint it with wolf's fat, and let her

sit at my hearth stone as my wife.""

" Quiet thyself, thou insane descendant of the consuls. We do not lead barbarians with ropes behind our cars in order to espouse their daughters. Avoid that extremity. Use first all honorable, simple means. Leave some time for thyself and me for reflection. To me Chrysothemis seemed a daughter of Jove, yet I did not wed her. Likewise Nero did not marry Acte, although they pretended she was the daughter of the. King Attalus. Calm thyself. Think that if she desires to leave Aulus for thee, they have not the power to prevent her. Know also that thou art not consuming one, i for Eros has kindled a flame in her too. This I saw, and me thou canst believe. Be patient. For everything there is a remedy, but to-day, as I have thought too much and am fatigued, now I promise thee, that to-morrow I will ponder over thy love, and Petronius never would be Petronius if he ; could not find a way."

L Both remained silent again. Finally Vinicius said quietly:

'11 thank thee., May fortune shower her blessings upon

thee."

**B** "Be patient."

Whither hast thou commanded thyself to be borne?"

"To Chrysothemis."

"Happy art thou for possessing one whom thou lovest."
"I? Dost thou know what amuses me in Chrysothemis?
It is this: she has proven jinfaithful to me with my own

freedman, the lute-player Theokles, and thinks I know it n^tr « Once I loved her. Now I am amused with her falséhoç, and silliness. Come witli me to her. Should she try seduce thee or write messages on the table with fingejit steeped in wine, know that I am not jealous."

And ho ordered that the litter be carried to the house o Chrysothemis. At the entrance, Petronius placed his hand

on the shoulder of Vinicius, and said:

"Pause, it seems to me I have devised a method."

"May the gods reward thee."

"Yes, I believe that thy plans will be infallible."

"Dost thou know what Marcus?"

"I hear thee, my God of Wisdom."

"Well, in a few days the divine Lygia shall partak". in thy house of the seed of Demeter."

"Thou art greater than Cæsar," said Vinicius, In hiy

.elated.

## CHAPTER IV.

Petronius kept his promise.

The day after his carousal at Chrysothemis, he slept the whole day, but at night was carried to the Palatine, where he had a long confidential audience with Nero. The result of it was that on the third day, a centurion at the head of a number of the pretorian guards appeared before the house of Plautius.

The times were uncertain and terrible. Messengers of this kind were more frequently harbingers of death. When the centurion struck the knocker at the door of Aulus and the superior of the atrium announced that soldiers were in the vestibule, the whole bouse was thrown into a panic. The family soon surrounded the old commander. No one doubted that misfortune had befallen him. Pomponia, embracing his neck with her arms clung to him with all her is strength, and with bloodless lips hurriedly uttered some soft words. Lygia with a face as pale as linen kissed his hands. Little Aulus clung to his toga. From the corridor, the room in the story assigned for the female servants (the servants' hall), the bath-room, the cellar, inumerous male and female

slaves rushed out. Cries of "heu! lieu, me miserum! v.-ere heard. The women- all wept. Some scratched their cheeks and buried their heads with shawls. Only the old commandant, who for years was accustomed to look death in the eyes, remained undisturbed. His eagle face looked as if chiseled from stone. After a while when the lamentation subsided and he had ordered the servants to disperse, he said:

"Release me, Pomponia. If it is decreed that my end

should come, we will have ample time to say farewell."

He pushed her aside gently. She exclaimed:

H Would that thy lot' was at the same time mine, oh, Aulus!" After which falling on her knees with a fervor, which only a fear for the loss of a dear one could inspire, she prayed.

Aulus passed into the atrium-where he waited for the centurion. It was old Caius Hasta, his old subordinate and

companion in the British wars.

"Hail commander," he said, I bring to thee the greetings and commands of Caesar. Here are the tablets and the seal to prove to thee that I come in his name."

"I am grateful to Caesar for his greetings and his commands I shall obey," answered Aulus, "Welcome, Hasta, and

tell me. thy mission.

"Aulus Plautius," began Hasta, "Caesar has learned that in thy home is the daughter of the King of Lygians, whom that king during the lifetime of the divine Claudius entrusted to the Romans as a pledge that, the boundaries of the empire would be undisturbed by the Lygians. The divine Nero is grateful to thee that for thou many years hast extended hospitality to her. Not wishing to further burden thy house and considering that maiden, as a hostage, should remain under the care of Cresar, himself and the Senate, he commands thee to surrender her into my hands."

Aulus above all was a soldier and too experienced a man to indulge in idle words or grief in the face of this decree. Nevertheless, signs of sudden anger and grief appeared on his forehead. Before that frown, at one time, the British legions quailed. Even at that moment fright was apparent on the face of Ilasta. At present, in view of that command, Aulus Plautius felt helpless. For a time he looked at the tablets and seal, after which, raising his eyes on the old centurion, he quietly said:

" Await, Hasta, in the atrium until the hostage be given to thee."

After speaking these words he went to the chamber, called oecus, where Pomponia, Lygia and little Aulus waited in great fear and anxiety.

"Death threatens no one," he said, "nor banishment to a distant island. Nevertheless, a messenger of Caesar is a forerunner of misfortune. It concerns thee, Lygia."

"Lygia?" exclaimed Pomponia, astounded.

"Aye," answered Aulus.

In addressing the maiden, he said:

"Lygia, thou wast nurtured in our house as our own child. Pomponia and myself love thee as our own daughter. But thou knowest that thou art not our child. Thou art a hostage given by thy nation to Rome, and the care of thee devolves upon Caesar. Therefore Caesar takes thee from our house."

The commander spoke quietly, but with a strange and unusual voice. Lygia listened to his words with downcast eyes, as if unable to comprehend the meaning of that commotion. The features of Pomponia were pale. In the doorway leading from the corridor to the oacus the terrified faces of the slaves gradually appeared.

"The will of Caesar must be performed," said Aulus.

"Aulus," exclaimed Pomponia, seizing the maid-in her arms as if she wished to defend her, "'twere better for her to die."

Lygia, nestling on her breast, repeated, "Mother, mother," being unable amidst her sobs to utter other words.

The countenance of Aulus reflected anger and pain.

"Were I alone in this world.," he said, sullenly, "I would not yield her alive, and my relatives to-day would make sacrifices to 'Jupiter Liberator.' But I have not the right to kill thee and our child, upon whom better days may fall. To-day I will go to Caesar and beseech him to change his decree. Whether he- will hear me, I know not. Meanwhile, be well, Lygia, and know that I and Pomponia always blessed the day when thou earnest to our fireside."

Saying this, he placed his hand on her head. Although he struggled to keep calm, yet at the moment when Lygia turned her eyes filled with tears towards him, and afterwards seUed

his hands and pressed them to her lips, his voice quivered with the deep sorrow of a father.

"Farewell, our joy, and the light of our eyes," he said.

He hurriedly returned to the atrium in order not to be conquered by emotions unworthy of a Roman and a commander.

In the meanwhile Pomponia led Lygia to the cubiculum, cheering her, giving her hope and speaking words which sounded strangely in that house, in which in an adjoining chamber was erected an altar with a lighted fire before which Aulus Plautius, faithful to ancient customs, offered sacrifices to the household gods.

The hour of trial arrived. Viginius said Pomponia thrust a dagger in the bosom of his daughter to free her from the clutches of Appius. Still earlier Lucretia, with her own life, paid for her involuntary shame. The palace of Ceesar was

a den of infamy, wickedness and crime.

"But we, beloved Lygia, know differently. We have not the right to slay ourselves. The laws under which we both live are different—greater and holier. It permits us, however, to defend ourselves from shame and evil, though in that defense we suffer martyrdom or death. Whoever emerges pure from a house of corruption deserves a greater reward. The world is such a house, but the happiness of life is but the twinkle of an eye. Resurrection comes only from the grave, beyond which not Nero but Mercy rules, and then there is joy instead of pain, happiness instead of tears."

After which she spoke of herself. Yes, she was calm, but in her bosom there was no lack of pain. The eyes of Aulus are yet clouded; the fountain of light has not burst upon him. She could not rear her son in the Truth. Whenever she thought that thus it might be to the end of life, and the moment of parting with them at any time, a hundred fold greater and more terrible were her pains than this temporary parting over whi'ch they were bewailing. She could not imagine how she could be happy in heaven without them. Many nights she wept, many nights she spent in prayer, imploring mercy and grace. But she offered her prayers to God and waited and hoped. Now a new blow fell upon her, when through the command of a tyrant, she is deprived of her dearest one— whom Aulus called the light of their eye.

She hoped yet, believing that there is a power greater than

Nero's—and mercy is mightier than his rage.

She pressed the head of the maid more firmly to her breast. Lygia dropped to her knees after a while, and burying her face in the folds of her peplus, she remained a long-time silent. When she arose finally her face appeared more serene.

" I grieve for thee, mother, father and brother, but I know that resistance would be useless and end in our ruin. I promise thee that thy words I will never forgte in the house of Caesar."

Once more she threw her arms around Pomponia's neck, after which they both left the oecus. She took farewell of little Plautius, the aged Greek who was their tutor, her dressing maid who once nursed her, and all the slaves.

One of them, a tall, broad-shouldered Lygian, who was called in the house Ursus, and -who had followed Lygia's mother and her to the Roman camp in the retinue of servants, fell at her feet, and then bending to the knees of Pomponia exclaimed:

"0 domina! permit me to go with my lady, that I may

serve her and watch over her in the house of Caesar."

"Thou art not our servant, but Lygia's," answered Pomponia, "but will they permit thee to pass the threshold of Caesar? And in what manner canst thou watch over her?"

'I know not domina; I only know that iron crumbles in

my hand like wood—"

Aulus Plautius, who joined them at this moment and having learned what they were speaking of, not only did not oppose the wishes of Ursus, but contended that they had no right to detain him. They are sending Lygia, whom Ctesar demanded as a hostage; they are therefore bound to send with her, her retinue, which likewise passes under-the control of Caesar. Here he whispered to Pomponia, that under the guise of a retinue she could add as many female slaves as she deemed proper. The centurion could not refuse their acceptance.

For Lygia. experienced -in this a certain delight. Pomponia was equally overjoyed that she could surround her with servants of her own choice. Besides Ursus, she designated the old dressing-woman, two women from Cyprus for dressing hair, and two. German girls for the bath. Her

choice fell upon adherents of the new faith, which for several years UrsuS professed. Pomponia could rely upon their fidelity, and at the same time was delighted with the thought, that the seeds of truth would be sown, in the house of Ciesar.

She wrote a few words commending the care of Lygia to the Nero's freedwoman, Acte. Pomponia, it is true, never saw her at the gatherings of the believers of the new creed. She heard, however, that Acte never refused them favors, and eagerly read the letters of Paul of Tarsus. It was finally known to her that the young freedwoman lived in continual sadness-; that she was entirely different from the other inmates of Nero's house, and was in fact the good soul

of the palace.

Hasta undertook to deliver the letter to Acte. Regarding it as a natural thing that the daughter of a king should have a retinue, he did not interpose the slightest objection to taking them to the palace. On the contrary, he wondered that their number ivas so small. He begged them, however, to hurry, as he feared that he might be accused of lack of zeal in executing orders. The hour of parting arrived. The eyes of Pomponia and Lygia again were filled with tears. Aulus once more placed liis baud on her head. After awhile the soldiers conducted Lygia to the house of Crnsar, followed by theories of little Aulus, who, in defense of his sister, shook threateningly his small fists at the centurion

The old commander ordered the litter to be prepared for him. Meanwhile shutting himself with Pomponia in the pin-

acotheca adjoining the oecus, he said to her:

"Listen to me, Pomponia. I am going to Caesar, although I believe in vain. I will see Seneca, although his words now have no weight with him. To-day Sophonius, Tigellinus, Petronius or Vatinius command more influence. As for Ciesar, he 'probably never in his life heard of the Lygian nation, and if he demanded the surrender of Lygia as a hostage, it was at the instigation of some one else. It is easy to surmise who caused this."

She suddenly raised her eyes.

"Petronius?"

"He?"

"This comes from allowing people without souls and

honor to cross your threshold. Cursed be the moment when Vinicius entered our house... He brought Petronius to us. Poor Lygia; it is not the hostage they care for, it is the mistress they want."

And his speech from anger, uncontrollable rage and sorrow for their adopted child, became more hissing than usual. For a time he was absorbed in thought. The clinched fists

only evinced the fierce struggle raging within him.

"I heretofore worshiped the gods," he said, "but at this moment I think that there are none in the universe, excepting one, who is treacherous, mad and monstrous, and his name is Nero."

"Aulus," said Pomponia, "Nero is but a handful of rot-

ten dust before God."

He, however, began to walk with long strides over the mosaic floor of the pinacotheca. In his life he had performed great deeds, but never encountered great misfortune. He, therefore, -was not accustomed to it. The old soldier became attached to Lygia more than he himself knew, and could not be reconciled to his loss. Besides, he felt humbled. He was smitten by a hand which he despised, but realized that in the presence of the power it possessed his power was nothing.

When finally he suppressed his anger, which confused his

thoughts, he exclaimed:

"I believe that Petronius did not have her taken from us for Caesar, as he would not dare to offend Poppsea. He took her then for himself or Vinicius; to-day I will ascertain the truth."

After awhile the litter carried him in the direction of the Palatine. Pomponia, being alone, went to little Aulus, who had not ceased crying for his sister or threatening Caesar.

## CHAPTER V.

Aulus rightly conjee.ured that he would not be admitted into the presence of Nero. He was informed that Nero was engaged in song with the lute-player Terpnos, and that as a rule he did receive those whom he himself did not summon. In other wofcls, it was an intimation that Aulus should make no further attempts to see him.

Seneca, though suffering from a fever, received the old commander with the honor due to him. When he heard the

purpose of his visit, he smiled bitterly and said:

"Only one service can I render thee, noble Plautius, and that is: never show Caesar that my heart feels thy affections or that I desired to aid thee. If Caesar had even the slightest suspicion in this matter, know that he would not return to thee Lygia, even for no other reason than to manifest his ill-will towards me."

He also would not advise him to see Tigellinus, Vatinius or Vitellius. Perhaps he could accomplish something with them by using money, and perhaps they might favor him in order to spite Petronius, whose influence they have been seeking to undermine; but in all likelihood they would betray to Caesar how dear Lygia was to Plautius, and then all the more Casar would refuse to surrender her.

Here the old sage spoke with biting irony which he turned

upon himself:

' Thou were silent, Plautius, silent throughout all thy years, and Caesar dislikes those who are silent. Why wert thou not enraptured with his beauty, virtue, song, his declamation, charioteering, and verses? Why didst thou not glorify the death of Brittanicus, deliver eulogies on the matricide and pay thy tribute for the smothering of Octavia? Thou lackest circumspection, Aulus, which we who live happily in the court possess in the required degree."

Saying this, he took the cup which he carried at the belt and filled it with water from the fountain in the impluvium.

Having refreshed his parched lips, he continued:

"Ah, Nero has a grateful heart. He loves thee, because thou hast served Rome and spread the fame of his name to the boundaries of the world. He loves me because I was his instructor during his youth. For this reason I know that

this water is not poisoned and can bo drunk-without fear. Wine in my house is less certain. If thou art thirsty drink fearlessly of this water. The aequeduct brings it from the Alban hills, and if they desired to poison it they would have to poison all the fountains in Rome. As thou seest thou canst yet be safe in this world and enjoy a peaceful old age. I am truly ill, not in the body, however, but in the soul."

It was the truth. Seneca kicked the strength of soul which Cornutas and Thrasea, for instance, possessed. Ilis whole life was a series of concessions to crime. He himself felt and understood that a believer in the principles of Zeno, of Citium, should have taken another road. For this

reason he suffered more than from a fear of death.

The commander interrupted these morbid thoughts. "Noble Annseus," he said, "I know how Oeesar repaid thee for the care with which thou ijidst surround him during his youthful years. But the instigator of this seizure of our Lygia is Petronius. Indicate to me a method with him; indicate to me the influences to which he is susceptible, and finally use upon him all the eloquence which thy old friend-

ship for me can inspire thee."

"Petronius and I," answered Seneca, "belong to two opposing camps. There is no way to persuade him. He is susceptible to no influences. It may be that with all his corruption he is worth more than all the scoundrels with whom to-day Nero is surrounded. To demonstrate to him that he has performed a wicked deed is only a loss of time. Petronius long since lost the sense of distinguising between right and wrong. Prove to him that his action is ugly, then he will feel ashamed. When I shall see him I will say to him, 'Thy,deed is worthy of a freedman,' If this will not help, nothing can."

"I thank thee for even this," answered the commander. After which he had himself borne to the house of Vinicius, whom he found fencing with his domestic trainer. Aulus, at the sight of the young man peacefully exercising at a time when the seisure of Lygia was consummated, was seized with a violent rage, which, as soon as the trainer passed beyond the curtains, burst in a torrent of bitter upbraidings and abuse. But Vinicius, hearing that Lygia was taken away, became so terribly livid that even Aulus could' not for a moment suspect him of participating in the assault.

The -forehead of the youth was covered with beads of perspiration. The blood which rushed to his heart returned to his face in burning waves. His eyes emitted sparks, while his lips poured forth incoherent questions. Jealousy and rage tossed within him like a tempest. It seemed to him that if Lygia once crossed the threshold of the house of Cæsar, she was forever lost to him. When Aulus mentioned Petronius, like lightning the suspicion flashed through the young soldier's mind that Petronius had made sport of him, or by the gift of Lygia sought to ingratiate himself further in the graces of Cæsar, or else that he -wished to have her for himself. That any one could have seen Lygia and not desire her at once, never found lodgment in-his mind.

The hereditary fury of his family carried him away like a

wild horse and took from him presence of mind.

"Commander," he cried with à broken voice, "return to thy home and wait for me. Know that if Petronius were my father, I would revenge myself on him for the wrong to Lygia. Return to thy home and wait for me. Neither Petronius nor Cæsar shall have her."

After which, turning to the wax masks, standing dressed

in the atrium, he burst out:

"By these mortal masks, I will first kill her and myself."

Having said this he broke off, and once more bidding -Aulus abruptly "to wait for me," he rushed like a mad man from the atrium and ran to Petronius, violently pushing

aside all pedestrians on the way.

Aulus returned home greatly relieved. He believed that if Petronius induced Cæsar to seize Lygia in order to give her to Vinicius, that Vinicius would bring her back to their home. Moreover, he found no little delight in the thought that if Lygia could not be saved, she would at least be avenged and be shielded from shame by death. He implicitly believed all that Vinicius promised. He witnessed his frenzy and knew the fury inherent in that family. He himself, though he loved Lygia as her own father, would have preferred to kill her than give her to Cæsar. Were it not for his solicitude for the welfare of his son, the last descendant of his race, he certainly would have done so.

Aulus was a soldier. He had hardly heard of the Stoics, yet his character differed but little from them. According

to his understanding and pride, death was better and easier than shame.

Returning home he pacified Pomponia and filled her with hope. Both waited for news from Vinicius. At moments when in the atrium footsteps of the slaves were heard they thought that perhaps it was Vinicius bringing their beloved child, and they were ready in the depths of their souls to bless them both. But the time passed and no intelligence came. At night the hammer was heard at the gate,

A few moments later a slave entered and gave Aulus a letter. The old commander, although he loved to display his self-control, took the letter with trembling hands and began to read eagerly as if the fate of his whole house was involved. Suddenly his face grew dark, as if the shadow of a passing

cloud fell upon it.

"' Read," he said, turning to Pomponia.

Pomponia took the letter and read as follows;

" Marcus Vinicius to Aulus Plautius, greeting: Whatever happened, happened by the will of Csesar, before which bow thy head, as I and Petronius bow ours."

A long silence followed.

## CHAPTER VI.

Petronius was at home. The doorkeeper did not dare to detain Vinicius, who rushed into the atrium like a gale. Learning that the master of the house could be found in the library, with the same speed he stumbled into the library. Finding Petronius writing, he wrenched the pen from his hand, broke it, violently laid his hand on his shoulder, and thrusting his face close to that of Petronius, asked in a hoarse voice:

"What didst thou do with her? Where is she?"

Then suddenly a strange thing happened. This slender and effiminate Petronius seized the hand of the young athlete, which clutched his shoulder, and afterwards the other, and in one hand firmly held them with the strength of a steel

"I am incompetent," he said, ' only in the morning. At night I regain my old-time vigor. Try to break away. A

weaver ii'mst have taught thee gymnastics,-and a blacksmith manners,"

On his face not a trace of anger could be seen, while his eyes reflected a light of courage and energy. After awhile he released the hands of Vinicius, who stood before him humbled, abashed and enraged.

"Thou hast a hand of steel," said Vinicius, "but by all the gods of hades, I swear to thee that if thou didst betray me I will thrust a knife in thy throat, even in the chambers

of Caesar."

"Let us speak calmly," answered Petronius; "steel, as thou seest, is stronger than iron, and though from thy arms two of mine could be made, I do not need to fear thee. Instead, I am deeply pained at thy vulgarity. If human ingratitude could astonish me, I would be amazed at thy ungratefulness."

"Where is Lygia?"

"In the brothel, that is, the house of Caesar."

"Petronius!"

"Calm thyself and be seated. I begged of Caesar two things, which he granted. First, to remove Lygia from the house of Aulus and then to give her to thee. Hast thou not a knife in the folds of thy toga? Thou canst stab me. But I would advise thee to wait for a few days, because thou wouldst be taken to prison and Lygia, in the meantime, would grow lonesome in thy house."

A silence followed. Vinicius looked at Petronius with astonished eyes and then said: "Forgive me. I love thee,

and my love has disordered my senses.'

"Be astonished at me, Marcus. Yesterday I spoke to Cffisar in this manner: My nephew, Vinicius, became so enamored with a slender girl, who is at present staying in the house of Aulus, that his house has changed into a steam bath-room from mere sighs; neither thou, I said, oh Caesar, nor myself, who know what real beauty is, would give a thousand sesterces for her. But this boy, who is as foolish as a tripod, hits become totally stupid."

"Petronius!"

"If thou canst not comprehend that I said this to protect Lygia, I am willing to believe that I spoke the truth. I persuaded Bronzebeard that such an aesthete as himself could not regard this girl as beautiful, and Nero, who here-

tofore dared not to look at such things excepting through my eyes, will not find in her any beauty. Not finding any beauty,' he will not desire her. I had to guard her from that monkey and draw her with a cord. But Poppsea will discover her charming qualities, and will undoubtedly endeavor to send her out of the palace with all possible haste. I further said to Caesar, with apparent reluctance: "Take Lygia and give her to Viniciu^. Thou hast the right to do this, as she is a hostage. If thou wilt so act, thou wilt offend Aulus. " He agreed. He had not the least reason for disagreeing; moreover, he had an opportunity of inflicting suffering upon respectable people. Thou shalt be the official guardian of this hostage. They shall entrust to thy hands this Lygian treasure, and thou like as an ally of the valiant Lygians and faithful servant of Caesar, will waste nothing of this treasure, but shalt see to it that it is increased. Caesar. to preserve appearances, will keep her for a few days in the palace, and then will send her to thy insula, happy one."

"Is it true? Nothing threatens her in the house of

Caesar?"

"Were she to dwell there permanently, Poppaea would confer in reference to her with Locusta, the poisoner, but for a few days there will be no danger. In the palace of Caesar, there are at present ten thousand people. In all probability he will not see at all—more especially as he confided in me to this extent, that only a moment ago the centurion called here with the information that he escorted her to the palace and placed her in the care of Acte. A good soul is this Acte, and for that reason I have had her put in her hands. Pomponia evidently entertains the same opinion, as she wrote her a letter. To-morrow there will be a feast at Nero's. I have engaged a place for thee beside Lygia."

"Forgive my impulsiveness, Cains" said Vinicius, "I

suspected that thou had her taken for thyself or Cmsar."

"Thy impulsiveness I can overlook, but it is much more difficult for me to forgive thy vulgar gestures, thy coarse cries and voice, which reminds me of players of Mora. Know that Tigellinus is Caesar's pander; and know also that if I wanted to take that maid for myself I would tell thee now, looking thee straight in the eye, this: 'Vinicius, I have taken from thee Lygia, and will keep her until she wearies me.'"

Saying this, he looked with his nut-like eyes straight into

the eyes of Vinieius, with a cold and audacious expression.

The young man became completely confused.

"The fault is mine," he said, "thou art good and worthy and I thank thee with my whole soul. Permit me only to propound one question. Why didst thou not have

Lygia' sent directly to my house?"

<sup>1</sup> Because Caesar wishes to preserve appearances. The people of Home will gossip about our taking Lygia as a hostage. So long as they will talk about it, she will remain in the palace of Caesar. Afterwards she will be quietly sent to thee and the matter will be ended. Bronzebeard is as cowardly as a cur. He knows that his power is limitless, and yet endeavors to justify every act. Hast thou recovered thyself sufficiently to philosophize a little? I have often wondered why crime, though as powerful as Caesar and certain to be unpunished, always strives to assume the semblance of right, justice and virtue? Why this trouble? I regard the murder of a brother, mother and wife as worthy of some petty Asiatic king, but not a Roman emperor. But if I found it advantageous, I would not write palliating letters to the Senate. Nero however, writes; he seeks appearances, because he is a coward. But Tiberius was' not a coward, yet he' justified every deed of his. Why is it? What a strange, involuniary homage vice pays to virtue! Dost thou know, how it appears to me? Why this is the reason, vice is ugly while virtue is beautiful. Ergo, a true aesthete is at the same time a virtuous man. Ergo, I am a virtuous man. To-day I must pour out wine to the shades of Protagoras, Prodicus and Georgias. It . demonstrates that the sophists are of some benefit. Listen, though I talk much. I took Lygia from Aulus, in order to give her to thee. Good. What a wonderful group would Lysippus form of you two. Both are beautiful, therefore my act is beautiful, and being beautiful it could not be w'icked. Look Marcus, before thee sits virtue incarnated in Petronius! If Aristides lived, he ought to come to me and offer me a hundred minre for this short dissertation on Virtue." JBut Vinieius being a man who cared more for the realities of life than expositions of virtue, said:

"To-morrow I will see Lygia and afterwards I will have

her in my house daily, continually until death."

"Thou wilt have Lygia, and I will have old Aulus on my

head. He will invoke upon me the revenge of all the subterranean gods. If that brute had only taken lessons before in decent declamation. But he will abuse me in the same manner that my clients were abused by my doorkeeper, whom I finally was compelled to send into the country."

"Aulus was at my house and I promised to send him

news about Lygia."

"Write to him that the will of the divine Caesar is. the supreme law, and that the name of thy first son shall be Aulus. It is necessary that the old man should have some comfort. I am willing to ask Bronzebeard to summon him to-morrow to the feast. Let him see thee in the triclinium beside Lygia."

"No, do not do that," said Vinicius. " I feel sorry for

them-especially Pomponia."

And he sat down and wrote the letter, which destroyed the last hope of the old commander.

## CHAPTER VII.

At one time, the proudest heads of Rome bowed before Acte, the quondam mistress of Nero. But even in those days she was unwilling to meddle in public affairs, and if she ever exerted her influence on the youthful ruler, it was merely to implore clemency for some one. Quiet and modest she won the gratitude of many and aroused the enmity of none. She did not even incur the ill-will of Octavia. To the envious she appeared harmless. It was known of her that she always loyed Nero with an affection, sad and suffering, and which thrived not upon hope but upon the recollection of the moments when Nero was not only younger and loving, but also better. It was also known that from these memories she could not tear her soul or thoughts, but as she expected nothing for there was no fear that Caesar would return to her she was regarded as a personage entirely unarmed and for that reason was left in peace.

Popptea treated herns a silent servant, who was to such a degree harmless that she did not demand her expulsion from

the palace.

As Ctesar once loved her and quietly thrust her aside

without offense and after a fashion in a friendly manner, she was shown certain courtesies. Nero, having freed her, ordered certain quarters in the palace assigned for her use, and in it a separate cubiculum, with a handful of people for servaixts. As Pallas andNarcis, though freedmen of Claudius, not only sat with Claudius at his feasts but as influential ministers occupied conspicuous places, so she sometimes

was invited to the Imperial banquet. This perhaps was done because her beautiful figure formed a real ornament to the feast. Finally Cæsar in his selection of companions long ago ceased to be guided by any considerations of propriety. At his table sat a most varied motley of men from all stations and occupations of life. There were among them senators but mainly those who consented to act the part of buffoons. There were patricians, old and young, eager for luxury, excesses and high living. There too, were women, the bearers, of great names, who did not hesitate to don at night, pale yellow perukes and seek diversion in escapades on dark thoroughfares. There, also, could be found high officials and priests who at the full bowl found pleasure in deriding their own divinities. Beside them, was a rabble of every kind, consisting of singers, mimics, musicians, male and female .dancers; of poets who while reciting verses, thought only of the sesterces which might be thrown to them for praising of Imperial verses. There likewise were staring philosophers, pursuing with eager eyes the viands which were served; famous chariot-drivers, artists, magicians, minstrels, jesters and finally human parasites, brought into vogue and a few day's notoriety, either by fashion or folly. Among them were quite a number who by their long hair covered their pierced ears, the sign of their former slavery. The noted ones sat directly at the table, the lesser served to amuse.in time of eating, waiting.until the moment when the servants would permit them to rush for what was left after the feast. Tigellinus, Vatinius, and Vitelius furnished guests of this character. They were often compelled to supply them with garments befitting the chambers of Cæsar, who delighted in such society, showing more freedom among them. The profusion of the Court gilded everything and covered everything with a glitter. The great and little, descendants of great families and the scum of the city pavements, famous artists and wretched scrubs of talent all

crowded to the palace to satiate their dazzled eyes with- a pomp, which almost surpassed all human comprehension, and to be near the giver of favors, riches and property and whose mere whims could degrade, but also might elevate beyond all measure.

On such a day Lygia was to take part in a like feast. Fear, uncertainty and a dazed feeling—not surprising afte'r the sudclen change—struggled within her with a desire of resistance. She feared Ceesar, she feared the people, she feared the palace, whose bustle took- away her presence of mind; she feared the feast of whose shamefulness she heard from Aulus, Pomponia, Greecina, and their friends. Though a young girl, she was not unsophisticated, for in those days evil knowledge reached early even the ears of children. She knew that in that palace ruin threatened her, against which Pomponia warned her in the moment of parting. Having a pure, young soul, filled with a lofty faith, which was instilled into her by her adopted mother, she vowed to defend herself from that ruin to her mother, herself and her Divine teacher, in whom she not only believed but loved with her half child--like heart for the sweetness of his teachings of the bitterness of death and the glory of resurrection. She was certain that now neither Aulus nor Pomponia Gnecina would be accountable for her conduct. She therefore debated with herseif, whether it would not be better to resist and not attend the feast. On the one hand fear and uneasiness whispered to her soul, on the other there was born in her a wish to display a courage and endurance, which would expose her to torture and death. Had not; the Divine teacher so commanded? Did He not himself give the example? Did not Pomponia tell her that the more rodent believers with all their souls desired for such a trial and prayed for it. And Lygia, while yet in the house of Aulus, at times was governed by the same desire. In her imagination she beheld herself a martyr, with wounds in her hands and feet, white as snow, beautiful with a beauty, not of the earth, borne through the azure sky by equally white angels. With such visions she delighed her imaginations. There was much in this of childish fancy, but also something of self-delight, which Pomponia chided. Now, when the opposition to the will of Caesar would entail with it terrible punishment, and when the martyrdom which she beheld in fancy would become a reality, there was added to those beautiful visions a kind of curiosity blended witli fear as to the punishment which would be meted to her, and as to the kind of torture which would be devised for her.

Thus she hesitated in her half-childish soul between the two emotions. When Acte learnt of the hesitancy of the maid she looked at her with amazement, as if she was sneaking in a fever. To display opposition to the will of the Caesar? To incur at the first opportunity his anger? She certainly must be a child who knows not whereof she speaks. From her own words, it appears that Lygia is not really a hostage, but a maid forgotten by her own nation. No laws of nations protect hers, and if they did, Caesar is potent enough to trample upon them in a moment of rage. It-hath pleased Caesar to take her in time he will dispose of her. From this time she is dependent on his will, above which

there is no superior in the world.

"So it is," she continued, "and I have read the letters of Paul of Tarsus and know that above the earth is God and the Divine Son, who rose from the dead, but on earth is only Caesar, Remember this, oh, Lygia. I know also that thy faith will not permit thee to be-what I was, and that you, like the Stoics, of whom Epictetus told me, when they are to make a choice between shame and death, can only choose death. But canst thou guess that death, not shame, awaits thee? Perhaps thou hast not heard of the daughter of Sejanus, who, by a decree of Tiberius in. order to comply<sup>7</sup> with the provisions of the law, which prohibits the execution of virgins, while yet a little girl, had to pass through shame before she was put to death. Lygia 1 «Lygia 1 do not irritate -Caesar. When the decisive moment comes when thou must choose betweeh dishonor and death, act as thy faith commands, but do not voluntarily seek thy ruin, and do not for a trivial cause irritate an earthly but at the same time a cruel divinity."

Acte spoke with great pity, even exaltation, and being naturally near-sighted, she drew her sweet face close to the face of Lygia to see if her words had any effect.

Lygia, with the trustfulness of a child, threw her arms around her neck and said:

"Thou art so good, Acte,"

Acte, moved by the praise and confidence displayed,

pressed her to ijer heart, and freeing herself from the arm» of the maid, answered:

"My good fortune has passed away; my joy has vanished,

but I am hot wicked."

After which she walked quickly, and spoke to herself as if in despair.-

"No, and he was not wicked. lie himself in those days thought that he was good, and desired to be good. I know best. It all occurred later—when he ceased to love. Others made him what he is—others—Popptea—"

Her eyes were filled with tears. Lygia followed her for

some time with her mild blue eyes. Finally she said—

"Thou dost mourn him, Acte?"

"I mourn," answered softly the Grecian. Again she began to walk with her hands clinched, as if from pain, and her face without hope.

Lygia further asked, with some embarrassment, "Thou

dost yet love him, Acte?"

"I do love him."

After a moment she added:

"Him no one loves but me."

A silence followed, during which Acte strove to regain her composure, disturbed -by recollections. When finally her countenance resumed her customary expression of quiet sad-

ness, she said:

" Let us speak of thee, Lygia. Do not think even of opposing Caesar. It would be madness. Above all, calm thyself. I' know well this house, and believe no danger threatens thee from the side of Caesar. If Caesar caused thee to be abducted for himself, he would not have thee brouglifto the Palatine. Here the power of Popptea is supreme, and from the time that she bore to Nero a daughter he has become absolutely under her control. No; Nero ordered, it is true, that thou shouldst be at the feast, but thee he has not seen, and has not inquired about thee, therefore, for thee lie does not care. Perhaps he has taken thee from Aulus and Pomponia through anger at them. Petronius wrote to me that I should take care of thee, and as thou knowest Pomponia also wrote. So, undoubtedly, they havebad a mutual understanding. Perhaps he did this at her prayer. If this is the case, and if on the prayer of Pomponia he lias taken charge of thee, who knows but that at

his persuasion Nero may return thee to Aulus. I know not whether Nero loves him overmuch, but I know that he seldom dares to contradict his opinions."

•¹ Ah, Acte," answered Lygia, "Petronius was at our house just before I was taken away, and my mother is convinced that Nero demanded my surrender at his instigation."

"That would be bad," said Acte. But considering, after

a few moments, she added:

- "Perhaps Petronius remarked at a feast of Nero, that he saw at the house of Aulus a Lygian hostage; and Nero, who is jealous of his powers, demanded thee for no other reason thau this, that hostages belong solely to Csesar. I-Ie, moreover, does not like Aulus and Pomponia. No. It does not seem to me that if Petronius wanted to take thee from Aulus, he would not resort to such methods. I do not know whether Petronius is better than those who surround Nero, but he is so different. After all, besides him thou mayst And some one who will intercede for thee. Didst thou not know at the house of Aulus any intimate of Caesar?"
  - "I saw Vespasian and Titus."
  - "Caesar likes them not."
  - . " And Seneca."

"It is sufficient when Seneca advises for Caesar to do the contrary."

The bright countenance of Lygia began to cover with blushes.

"And Vinicuis."

"I do not know him."

- "He is a relative of Petronius, who recently returned from Armenia."
  - "Thinkest thou, that Nero would be pleased to see him?"

" All people love Vinicius."

"Would he intercede for thee?"

"Aye."

Acte, smiling tenderly, said:

"Then you will undoubtedly see him at the feast. At the feast you must be, because you must------only such a child as thou art would think otherwise. Again, if thou desirest to return to the house of Aulus, thou wilt have an opportunity to implore Petronius and Vinicius to use their influence to secure thy return, Were they here, they both

would tell tliee what I have said; it would be madness and destruction to try resistance. Caesar, it is true, may not notice thy absence, but if he did, and thought that thou didst dare to oppose, there would be no rescue for thee. Come, Lygia. Dost thou hear the noise in the house? The sun is descending and the guests will soon arrive."

"Thou art right, Acte," answered Lygia, "I will follow

thy advice.."

How much of this resolution was caused by a desire of meeting Vinicius and Petronius, how much by a feminine curiosity of beholding once in her life such a feast, and at it Caesar, the court, the famous Popptea and other beauties, and that unrivaled pomp, of which wonders were related in Rome, Lygia herself probably could not tell. Acte, moreover, in her way was right, and the maiden felt this distinctly. Go, she had to. Therefore, when necessity and plain reason aided concealed temptation, she ceased to hesitate.

Acte conducted her to her own unctorium to anoint and dress her, and although there was no lack of slaves in the house of Caesar and Acte had quite a number at her command, yet through sympathy for the maiden, whose innocence and beauty captivated her heart, she decided to dress her herself. It soon appeared that in the young Grecian woman, notwithstanding her sadness and her perusal of the letters of Paul and Taurus, there remained yet a great deal of the ancient Hellenic spirit, which 'prized beauty of body above all other things in the world. Having undressed her, on the sight of her figure at once slender and full, as if created from a mass of pearls and roses, she could not refrain from a cry of admiration. Stepping away a few paces she gazed with rapture on that unequaled spring from Lygia, she finally exclaimed, "thou art a hundred times more beautiful than Poppaea."

But the maiden, educated in the strict home of Pomponia, where modesty was observed even when the women were alone, stood—wonderful as a dream and harmonious as a work of Praxiteles, or like a song, but confused, rosy from shame, with knees pressed together, with her hands covering her breasts and drooping eyelids. Finally she suddenly raised her arms, pulled out the pins which held her hair, and with one shake of her head she was covered with them

as if by a cloak.

Approaching and touching her dark hair, Acte said:

0, what hair thou hast ! I will not- bestrew it with golden powder, for where it is braided it gleams itself like gold. Only here and there I will add some golden lustre, but slightly, as if a ray had brightened tiiem. Your Lygian country must be wonderful where such girls are born."

"I do not remember it "-answered Lygia-" but Ursus told me that there is nothing there but forests, forests,

forests,"

"And flowers bloom in the forests" said Acte dipping her hands in the vase full of verbena and moistening Lygia's hair with it.

After finishing this task she began to rub Lygia's whole body with perfumed oils from Arabia, and afterwards she attired her in a soft golden colored tunic without sleeves, over which the snowy peplum was to come. But since it was necessary to first comb her hair, she wrapped her in a loose garment called a synthesis, and seating her on a chair she turned her over to woinen-slaves to attend to the combing. Two slave-women, began to put white slippers, embroidered with purple lacings and golden bands on Lygia's feet. When at last the combing was over the peplum was put op and arranged in most beautiful light folds; then Acte hanging pearls around her neck and touching the hair on the ringlets with golden dust, told Lygia to finish her toilet, following her all the time with enraptured eyes.

But she -was soon ready, and when the first litters began to appear before the principal gate they both entered the side criptoportium from -which were seen the main gate, interior galleries and the court-yard, surrounded by a colonnade of Numidiah marble. Gradually more and more people passed under the lofty arch of the gate over which a magnificent quadriga of Lygia's seemed to bear in the air Apollo and Diana. Lygia's eyes were struck by a magnificent sight, of which the humble house of Aulus could not give her the least idea. It was a moment of sunset, and its last rays fell on the columns of the yellow Numidian marble, which in those gleams shone like gold, and at the same time changed into a rosy color. Among the columns, near the white statues of Danaid and others representing gods#or heroes, crowds of people-men and women-passed through, similar to statues, draped in togas, peplumes and stolas, falling grace-

fully toward the earth with soft folds, on which the gleams of the setting sun were expiring. The gigantic Hercules, with his head yet in light, but plunged to the breast in shadow cast by the column, looked from above on that crowd. Acte showed to Lygia senators in broad bordered togas, and in many colored tunics, with crescents on their shoes; knights and famous artists, Roman ladies dressed in Roman, Greek, or in fantastic oriental costumes, with hair dressed into towers, pyramids, or combed after the example of the statues of goddesses— low on the head and adorned with flowers. Many men and women Acte called by name, adding to their names short and sometimes terrible stories, which seized Lygia with fright, admiration or amazement. It was for her a wonderful world, the beauty of which was drank by her eyes, but whose contrast her girlish mind could not understand. In the purple sunset of the sky, in those rows of motionless columns vanishing in the distance, and in those people similar to statues was a certain great calmness. It seemed that among those marbles of straight lines half-gods might live free of cares, soothed and happy; meanwhile the low voice of Acte disclosed again and again, always new and terrible secrets of this palace and those people. There a dryptoportico is to be seen on the columns and floors bloody stains with which Caligula bespatted the white marbles when he fell under the knife of Cassius Cherea; there his wife was murdered; there his child was smashed against the stones; there under the wing is a subterraneous place in which the younger Drusus gnawed at his hands from hunger; there the eldest was poisoned; there Gemellus twisted from terror; there Claudius in convulsions there, Germanicus; every where those walls heard groans and rattling of the dying, and those men which hasten now to the feast in togas, in bright colored tunicas, in flowers and jewels, may become the condemned of to-morrow; may be on more than one face the smile covers terror, uncertain of the next day; may be feverishness, avidity, jealousy gnaw at this moment into the hearts of those seemingly free of cares, crowned half-gods. The frightened thoughts of Lygia could not keep pace with the words of Acte, and when that wonderful world attracted with increasing fierce her eyes, the heart became pressed within her, and in her soul suddenly sprang up an unspeakable and unbounded longing for the beloved Pomponia Grtecina

and for the quiet house of Aulus, in which love, not crime,

reigned

Meanwhile from Vicus Apollinis new waves of guests were flowing. From beyond the gates came the bustle and shouts of clients escorting their patrons. The courtyard and colonnades swarmed with a multitude of Ciesar's slaves, male and female, small lads, and pretorian soldiers keeping guard in the palace. Here and there among white and swarthy visages blackened a face of a Numidiañ in a feathered helmet and with large golden rings in the ears. Lutes, cithras, bunches of flowers artificially reared in spite of the late autumn, silver, gold and copper hand lamps were carried by. Louder and louder sounds of conversation mingled with the splash of the fountain, of which the tresses rosy, from the evening gleams, falling from high above on the marble, broke as if with sobs.

Acte ceased to speak, but Lygia continued to look as if searching for some one in the crowds. And suddenly her face covered with a blush. From among the columns came forth Vinicius and Petronius and walked to the great triclinium, beautiful, calm, similar' in their togas to white gods. When Lygia saw among strange people those two known and friendly faces, and especially When she saw Vinicius, it seemed to her that a great weight fell off her heart. She felt herself less alone. That measureless longing for Pomponia and the house of Aulus which a moment ago sprang

up in her, ceased to be afflictive.

The temptation to see Vinicius and the conversations with him deafened all other voices. In vain did she remember everything bad which she heard of Caesar's house and the word of Acte, and the warning of Pomponia; in spite she felt all at once that she must not only be at this feast, but that she desired to be; at the thought that in a moment she will hear this amiable and dear voice which spoke to her of love and happiness worthy of gods, and which till now sounded in her ears as a song, true joy seized her. But suddenly she became afraid of that joy. It seemed to her that in this moment she betrays also this pure teaching in which she was brought up, also Pomponia and herself. Another thing is to go under constraint and another to be delighted with such constraint. She felt herself guilty, unworthy and ruined. She was seized by terror and she

was inclined to weep. If she was alone she would kneel down and beat herself in the breast, repeating, "my guilt, my guilt!" Acte, now taking her by the hand, led her through interior rooms to the great triclinium in which the feast was to take place, and it dimmed her eyes, it roared in her ears from internal emotions and the beating of her heart stopped her breath. As if in a dream she saw thousands of lamps gleaming on the tables and walls, she heard as if through sleep the shout with which Cossar was greeted, and she saw him as if through mist; The shout deafened her, the glitter dazzled, the odors intoxicated her, and losing the rest of consciousness she was barely able to recognize Acte, who having seated her at the table, took a place at her side.

But after a moment a low, known voice was heard from the other side:

"Be greeted the most beautiful of the maidens on earth and of the stars in the sky! Be greeted divine Callina!"

Lygia, regaining consciousness somewhat, looked to her side; near her rested Vinicius.

He was without a toga, for the comfort and the usage

commanded to throw off the togas for the feast. His body was only covered by a scarlet-tunic without sleeves, embroidered with silver palms. His shoulders were naked, ornamented by the Oriental fashion with two broad, golden shoulder-bands wound above the elbow; below carefully cleaned of hair, smooth, but also muscular, real arms of a soldier crested for the sword and shield. On his head he wore a garland of roses. With his brows united above the nose, with his magnificent eyes and dark complexion, he was

the personification of youth and strength, as it were. To Lygia he seemed so beautiful, that though her first stupor

Be greeted Marcus."

had passed, she was barely able to answer;

And he said:

"Happy my eyes which see thee; happy my ears which heard thy voice, more amiable to me than the sound of flutes and citharas. If I was ordered to choose who has to rest near me at this feast, thou, Lygia or Venus, I would choose thee, 0 divine 1"

And he began to look at her as if wishing to sate himself with the sight of her, and he burned her with his eyes. His glance slipped from her face to her neck and bare arms, fondled her beautiful shape, admired her, embraced her, devoured, but, besides the desire, a happiness and love and unbounded delight gleamed in him.

"I knew that I should see thee in the house of Caesar," he continued, ' ' and yet, when I perceived thee, such a joy shook my whole soul, as if a happiness entirely unexpected

had met me."

Lygia, recovering, and feeling that in this crowd and in this house he is the only being near to her, began to converse with him, and inquire about everything that was incomprehensible to her, and which filled her with fear. How did he know that he would find her in Caesar's house? And why is she here? Why did Caesar take her away .from Pomponia? She is afraid here and wishes to return to her.. She would die from yearning and uneasiness if not for the hope that Petronius and he will interpose before Caesar in her behalf.

Vinicius explained to her that he learned about her capture from Aulus himself. Why she is here he does not know. Caesar does not give account to anybody of his instructions and orders. Still she should not fear. For he, Vinicius, is at her side and will remain at her side. He would prefer rather to lose his eyes than not to see her; he would prefer to lose his life than desert her. She is his soul, and therefore he will watch over her as over his own soul. He will build for her in his house an altar, as to his divinity, upon which he will offer myrrh and aloes, and in spring time saffron and apple-blossoms. \* \* \* And if she is afraid of the house of Caesar, he promised her that she shall not remain in it.

And, although he spoke cavillingly—and at times he was inventing—still in his voice the truth was felt, because his sentiments were genuine. A sincere pity also seized him, and her words penetrated his soul so, that when she began to thank him and assure him that Pomponia would love him for his kindness, and that she herself would be thankful to him all her life; he could not master his emotion, and it seemed to him that never in his life would he be able to resist her prayer. His heart began to melt within him. Her beauty, intoxicated his senses and he desired her, but at the same time he felt that she was very dear to him, and he

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could really worship her like a divinity; he felt also an irresistible necessity of speaking about her beauty and about his admiration for her, and as the noise at the feast was increasing, he began, drawing nearer to her, to whisper words kind and sweet, coming from the depth of his soul, sounding as music, and intoxicating like wine.

And he intoxicated her. Among those strangers who were surrounding her he seemed to her more and more near, more and more dear, and entirely true, and devoted with his whole soul. He calmed her—promised to deliver her from Caesar's house; he promised that he would not desert her and that he would serve her. Besides this, formerly, Aulus' house, he spoke to her only of love and of the happiness that love could give, while at present he said openly that he loved her, that she was most beloved and dear to him. Lygia heard such words from a man's lips for the first time, and as she kept on listening it seemed to her that something was awakening within her as from a slumber; that certain happiness seizes her, in which an immense joy is mingled with an immense uneasiness. Her cheeks began to burn, her heart to beat, her mouth opened as if in astonishment. Fear was seizing her that she was listening to such things, and yet she would not lose a single word for anything in the world. At times she dropped her eyes, then again she raised to Vinicius her bright, timid, and at the same time inquiring glance, as if she wished to tell him: The noise, the music, the odor of the flowers, and the scent of Arabian perfumes began to intoxicate her again. It was customary in Rome to repose at feasts, but at home Lygia occupied a place between Pomponia and the little Aulus, while now Vinicius was reposing at her side—young, immense, enamored, burning; and she, feeling the heat which was beaming from him, felt shame and delight at. the same time. A certain sweet weakness was embracing her, certain faintness and oblivion, as if sleep was coming upon her.

But the nearness of her began also to act upon him. His face grew pale; his nostrils dilated like those of an eastern horse. Evidently his heart, too, was beating with an unusual throb under the scarlet tunic, for his breathing became short and his words were breaking in his mouth. He also for the first time was near her. His thoughts began to be confused; in his

veins he felt a fire which he tried in vain to extinguish with wine. It was not the wine which was intoxicating him more and more, but her wonderful face; her bare arms, her virgin breast heaving under the golden tunic, and her form concealed in the white folds of the peplum. At last he seized her arm above her wrist, as he did once in Aulus' house, and, drawing her to himself, he began to whisper with trembling lips:

<sup>1</sup> 'I love thee, Callina, . . . My godlike . . . ! "

"Marcus, let me loose," said Lygia.
 ..But he continued with eyes covered with mist.

"My godlike! Love me . . .!"

But in the same instant the voice of Acte was heard, who was reposing at the other side of Lygia.

"Caesar is looking at you."

Vinicius, was seized with a sudden anger at Caesar and at Acte. For now her words dispersed the charm of the intoxication. Even a friendly voice would seem intruding to the young man in such a moment, and he judged that Acte wished purposely to interrupt his conversation with Lygia.

So, raising his head and looking, over the shoulders of

Lygia at the young freedwoman, he said with malice:

The time, Acte, when thou hast reposed at feasts by the side of Caesar had passed, and they say, that blindness is menacing thee, 'so how canst thou see him?"

But she answered as if with sadness:

"Still I see him—he is near-sighted too, and is looking

at you through an emerald."

Everything that Nero was doing raised the watchfulness even in those nearest him, therefore Vinicius became alarmed, recovered, and began to look imperceptibly in the direction of Caesar. Lygia, who at the beginning of the feast, being confused, saw him as if through a mist, and afterwards, seized by the presence and conversation of Vicinius, did not look at him at all, now also directed her eyes at him, curious and terrified at the same time.

Acte told the truth. Caesar, bending over the table, halfclosing one eye, while holding at the other one a round, polished emerald, which he used continually, was looking at them. For a moment his eye met Lygia's, and the heart of the maiden contracted with terror. When yet a child, she was at the rural estate of Aulus in Sicily, an 'old Egyptian

slave-woman told her of dragons inhabiting the caverns of the mountains, and just now it seemed to her as if the greenish eye of such a dragon was looking at her. With her palm she caught the hand of Vinicius, like a child who is afraid, and in her head fearful and quick impressions began to crowd: So that was he? The terrible and all-powerful one? She had not seen him till then, but she thought that he would look differently. She imagined to herself some terrible face with petrified malice in it; but.now she saw a large head posted upon a thick neck, terrible, it is true, but al-\* most ridiculous, for it looked like a child's head from a distance. A tunic of the amethyst-color, forbidden to common mortals, was throwing a bluish reflection upon his wide and short face. His hair was dark, dressed in a fashion originated by Otho, in four rows of curls. He had no beard, because a short time ago he sacrificed it to Jove, for which the whole Rome was offering thanks to him,, although it was whispered discreetly that he sacrificed it because, like all of his family, his beard was reddish. In his strongly protruding forehead there was, however, something Olympian. In the contracted brows the consciousness of all-powerfulness was evident; but below that forehead of a demi-god there was a face of a monkey, a drunkard and comedian, vain, full of changing desires, notwithstanding his young age, flooded with fat, and still sickly and foul. To Lygia he seemed ominous, but above all abominable.

After awhile he laid down the emerald and ceased to look at her. Then she saw his bulging blue eyes, winking from the excess of light, glassy, thoughtless, like the eyes of the

dead.

Caesar, turning toward Petronius, said:

"Is that the hostage, whom Vinicius loves?"

"That is she,'-'answered Petronius.

"How is her nation called?"

"The Lygians."

"Does Vinicius consider her beautiful?"

'1 Dress a rotten olive trunk in a woman's peplum and Vinicius will acknowledge it as beautiful. But upon thy face, 0 incomparable connoisseur, I read already thy sentence upon her! Thou dost not need to proclaim it! So it is! too dry! lean, areal poppy-head upon a thin stalk, and thou, 0 godlike aesthete, appreciatest (1) the stalk in the

woman, and three, four times art thou right. The face alone does not mean anything. I profited a great deal near thee, but I have not yet such a sure glance of an eye. And' I am ready to bet Tullius Senecio for his mistress, that, although at a feast where all are laying, it is difficult to give opinion of the whole form, thou hast already said to thyself: 'too narrow in the-hips?"

' Too narrow in the hips," answered Nero, closing his eyes.

A smile hardly perceptible appeared upon Petronius' lips, while Tullius Senecio, who till that moment was occupied with conversation with Vestinius, or rather with scoffing at the dreams, in which Vestinius believed, turned toward Petronius, and, although he had not the slightest idea what was in question, he said:

"Thou art mistaken. I hold with Csesar."

"Good," answered Petronius. " I was argumenting just now that thou hast- a pinch of good sense, while Ciesar

asserts that thou art an ass without any admixture."

" Habet I" said Nero, laughing and turning downwards the great finger of his hand, as was done in the circuses as a sign, that the gladiator received, a blow and. should be killed.

And Vestinius, thinking that the conversation was about the dreams cried:

" But I believe in dreams, and Seneca told me once that he, too, believes."

'11 dreamt last night that I became a vestal," said Calvia

Crispinilla, bending over a table.

At this Nero began clapping his hands, others followed, and for awhile applauding was heard all around, for Crispinilla, who was several times divorced, was known throughout Rome for her fabulous profligacy. But she, not confused in the least, said:

"And what! They are all old and ugly. Rubria alone, is similar to a human being, and so there would be two of us, although Rubria, too, gets freckles in summer."

"Allow, however, purest Calvia," said Petronius, "that to become a vestal, thou couldst only through a dream."

"And if Csesar would command this?"

"I would then believe that even the most strange dreams verify."

"But they do verify," said Vestinius. "I understand

people who do not believe in Gods, but how one cannot believe in dreams I know not?"

"And predictions?" asked Nero. "I predicted once that Rome would cease to exist, and I would rule the whole Orient."

"Predictions and dreams connect with each other," spoke Vestinius. "Once, one proconsul, a great disbeliever, sent to the temple of Mopsus a slave with a sealed letter which he did allow to be opened, in order to verify if the god will be able to answer to the question contained in the letter. The slave slept that night in the temple to have a prophetic dream, then he returned and said so: 'I dreamt of a youth, bright as the sun, and who told me only one word: 'Black.' The proconsul hearing this grew pale, and turning to his guests, equally disbelievers as himself: 'Do you know' what was in the letter?' "

Here Vestinius interrupted, and raising a goblet with wine began to drink.

"What was in the letter?" asked Senecio.

"In the letter there was the question: 'What bull shall offer, white or black?'"

But the interest roused by the narrative was interrupted by Vitelius, who becoming already half-drunk at lhe feast, suddenly burst forth with a senseless laughter.

1 'What does that keg of tallow laugh at?" asked Nero.

"The laughter distinguishes men from animals," said Petronius, "and he has no'other proof that he is not a hog."

Vitelius half stopped his laughter, and smacking with-his lips shining from gravies and fats, began to look at those present with such amazement as if he had never seen them before.

Then he raised the palm of his hand, similar to a cushion, and said with a hoarse voice:

"The ring of a Knight fell off my finger, a ring left to me by my father who was a cobbler."

But Vitelius again burst forth with an unexpected laughter and began to look for the ring in the peplum of Calvia Crispinilla.

At this Vatinius began to imitate shouts of a frightened woman, and Nigidia, Calvia's friend, a young widow with the face of a child and eyes of a prostitute woman, said loudly: "He seeks what he has not lost."

' 'And which would be of no use to him even should he

find it," finished the poet Lucan.

The feast became merrier. Crowds of slaves bore around new and new courses; from great vases filled with snow and wrought up with ivy, smaller vessels with various kinds of wine were taken out every moment. All drank freely. From time to time roses fell from the ceilings on the guests.

Petronius, however, begged Nero to ennoble the feast with his singing before the guests would be too drunk. A chorus of voices supported his words, but Nero at first declined. It was not only a question of courage, though it failed him always. The gods know how much all displaying cost him. It is true he does not avoid it, but does it only for the necessity of doing something for the art, and besides if Appollo has gifted him with a voice, it beseems not to waste divine gifts. He even understands that it is his duty toward the dominion. But to-day he is really hoarse. In the night he had placed leaden weights on his breast, but even that did not help any. He even thought to go to Antium to breathe the sea air. But Lucan began to implore him in the name of art and humanity. Everybody knows that the divine poet and singer composed a new hymn to Venus, compared with which the hymn of Lucretius is the whining of yearling wolfs. Let that feast be a real feast A ruler so good, ought not to cause such torments to his subjects.

"Do not be a tyrant, O Cmsar 1" repeated all who were

sitting nearer.

Nero spread out his hands as a sign that he must yield. All faces then bore an expression of gratitude, and all eyes turned to him. He, however, commanded before to let Poppsea know that he would sing, and those present he informed that she did not come to the feast as she herself felt sick; but since no medicine brings her such a relief as his singing, therefore he would be sorry to deprive her of that opportunity.

And in fact Poppaea came. She ruled Nero hitherto as if her subject; she knew,however, that when it was the question of his self-love as a singer, driver or poet, it would be dangerous to irritate him. So she entered, beautiful as a divinity, dressed equally as Nero in a garment of amethyst color, and in a necklace of gigantic pearls, plundered once on

Massinissa, golden haired, sweet, and though divorced from two husbands with the face and look of a maiden.

She was greeted by the shouts and name of <sup>1</sup> Divine Augusta." Lygia never saw in her life anyone equally as beautiful, and she could not believe her eyes for it was known to her that Popptea Sabina was one of the most wicked women in the world. She knew from Pomponia that it was Poppaea who brought Caesar to murder his mother and wife; she knew her from the narratives of Aulus' guests and servants; she heard that statutes of her were overthrown at night time in the city; she heard of the inscriptions, the authors of which were sentenced to the heaviest punishments, but which inscription still appeared every morning on the walls of the city anew.

Meanwhile at the sight of the notorious Augusta, believed by the confessors of Christ as the incarnation of evil and crime, it seemed to her that angels or some heavenly spirits might look like her. She could not keep her eyes off of

her, and from her lips involuntarily wrestled a question:

"Ah, Marcus, can that be possible?"...

But he, roused by wine and as if impatient that so many things scattered her attention and took her away from him and his words, said: "Yes, she is beautiful, but thou art a hundred times more beautiful. Thou dost not know thyself, otherwise thou wouldst fall in love with thyself as Narcissus. ... .She bathes in the milk of she-asses, but Venus probably bathed thee in her-own. Thou dost know thee, ocelle mil. ... Do not look at her. Turn thy eyes to me, ocelle mil. ... Touch with thy lips this goblet of wine and then I

will put'mine on the same place....

And he drew himself nearer and nearer, and she began to withdraw toward Acte. But at that moment silence was commanded for Ctesar stood up. The singer Teodor handed him a lute of the kind called delta; another one, Terpnos, who was to accompany him with playing, approached with an instrument called nablium, and Nero resting the delta on the table, raised his eyes into the heaven and for a moment silence reigned in the triclinium, interrupted only by the sound of falling roses from the ceiling. Then he began to sing or rather speak singingly and rhythmically to the sound of two lutes, his hymn to Venus. Neither his voice though somewhat dimmed, nor the verse were bad, so that Lygia

was again seized by reproaches of conscience, for the hyp>i though glorifying impure, pagan Venus, seemed to her more than beautiful, and Caesar himself with his laurel wreath on his forehead and with his raised eyes appeared more magnificent, much less terrible and less disgraceful than at the beginning of the feast.

But the banqueters answered with a thunder of applause. Cries of "0, heavenly voice I' resounded round about, some of the women raising their hands remained thus in the sign of delight even after the end of the song; others wiped their tearful eyes; in the whole hall it began to seethe as in a bee-hive. Poppsea, bending her golden haired head, raised to her lips Nero's hand and held it long in silence, and the young Pythagoras, a Greek of wonderful beauty, the same to whom later the half-insane Nero ordered the flamens to marry him with the observance of all rites, now knelt down at his feet.

But Nero looked watchfully at Petronius, whose praises were always wished for (to him above others), while Petronius said:

"If the music is concerned, then Orpheus must at present be as yellow with envy as Lucan who is present, and as to the verses—I am sorry that they are not worse, for then, perhaps, I would be able to find words proper to praise them."

But Lucanus did not think ill of him for the mention of envy; on the contrary, he looked at him with gratitude, and feigning ill humor, began to mutter:

"Cursed fate, which ordered me to live contemporary with such a poet. A fellow would have a place in the memory of men and upon the Parnassus, but this way he will be extinguished like a lantern near the sun."

Petronius, however, who had an astonishing memory, began to repeat verses from the hymn, recite single lines, praise and discuss the more beautiful expressions. Lucan, as if forgetting his envy in presence of the charm of the poetry, added his ecstasy to his words. Delight and bottomless vanity, not only touching upon stupidity, but completely its equal, were depicted upon Nero's face. He himself indicated to them verses, which he considered the most beautiful, and at last he began to console Lucan- and tell him not to lose courage, for, although a man remains what

he was born, still the honor shown by men to Jove does not

exclude honors for other gods.

Then he 'arose to accompany Poppaea, who, being really sick, wished to withdraw. But he ordered the feasters who remained to occupy their places again, and he promised to return. In fact he returned after awhile to intoxicate himself with the smoke of incenses, and to look at further spectacles, which he himself, Petronius or Tigellinus, had prepared for the feast.

Verses were read again or dialogues were listened to, in which oddness took the place of humor. Then the famous mimic, Paris, represented the adventures of Iona, the daughter of Inachos. To the guests, and especially to Lygia, unaccustomed to such spectacles, it seemed that they saw wonders and witcheries. Paris knew how to express with the motions of his hands and body things apparently impossible to be expressed in a dance. His palms embroiled the air, forming a bright (worldly) cloud, living, full of quiverings, voluptuous, surrounding the half-fainting shape of a maiden, shaken by a spasm of pleasure. This was a picture, not a dance—a clear picture, unveiling the secrets of love, charming and shameless—and when, after it was finished, the Coribants entered and began with Syrian maidens to, the sounds of citharas, flutes, cymbals and drums, a bacchic dance, full of wild shrieks and yet wilder dissolution—it seemed to Lygia that à living fire was burning her, that a thunderbolt ought to strike this house, or that the ceiling ought to fall upon the heads of the feasters.

But from the golden net spread under the ceiling only

roses were falling, while half-drunk Vinicius said to her:

<sup>9</sup>I saw thee in the house of Aulus at the fountain, and I fell in love with thee. It was dawn, and thou hast thought that nobody was looking at thee, but I saw thee, . . . And such I see thee now, though the peplum hides thee from me. Throw away the peplum like Crispinilla. See! Gods and men seek love. Besides love, there is nothing in the world 1 Place thy head against my breast and close thy eyes."

The pulse beat heavily in her temples and hands. An impression was seizing her as if she were rushing into an abyss, while this Vinicius, who formerly seemed so near and sure to her, instead of helping was drawing her into it. And she began to have resentment against him. A certain voice

like the voice of Pomponia was calling in her soul: <sup>11</sup> Lygia, save thyself! "But something told her also that it was too late, and that whoever was surrounded by such a flame, who saw all that was done at this feast, whose heart beat as hers did when she listened to the words of Vinicius, and who was penetrated by such a shudder as penetrated her when he neared her, was lost helplessly. Weakness seized her. At times it seemed to her that she would faint, and that something terrible would afterward take place. She knew that, under the penalty of Caesar's anger, no one was permitted to rise until Caesar rises, but even if it were not so she would not have strength for it.

Meanwhile it was far from the end of the feast. The slaves were bringing fresh dishes, and were continually filling the cups with wine, and before the table, placed in an area open from one side, appeared two athletes, to give the guests

the sight of wrestling.

And instantly they began to struggle. The powerful bodies, glistening from olive oil, formed one mass, their bones were cracking in their iron arms, an ominous gnashing escaped from their compressed jaws. At times there were heard quick, dull strikes of their feet against the floor sprinkled with saffron; then, again,- they stood motionless silent, and to the spectators it seemed that they had before them a group chiseled out of stone. The eyes of the Romans were following with delight the play of terribly exerted backs, calves and arms. But the struggle did not last too long, for Croto, master and director of the school of gladiators, was not in vain known as the strongest man in the empire. His adversary began to breathe more and more heavily, then rattling was heard in his throat, after which his face became blue; finally he spurted out blood through his mouth and hung down.

A thunder of applause. greeted the end of the combat, while Croton, placing his foot on the spine of the adversary, crossed his gigantic arms upon his breast and looked around

the hall with the eyes of a triumphator.

Next entered the feigners of beasts and their voices, jugglers and clowns, but little they were looked upon, because the wine dimmed the eyes of the spectators. The feast was changing gradually into a drunken and voluptuous orgy. The Syrian maidens who danced in the bacchic dance became

mingled with the guests. The music changed into an orderless and vile sound of citharas, lutes, Armenian cymbals, Egyptian sistras, trumpets and horns, and as some of the feasters desired to converse, they cried to the musicians to go away. The air, saturated with the odor of flowers, full of the scent of oils with which beautiful boys were sprinkling during the feast the feet of the guests, satiated with saffron and human exhalations, became close; the lamps were burning with a dim flame, the wreaths upon the foreheads became crooked, the faces became pale and covered with drops of sweat.

Vitelius dropped under the table. Nigidia, stripping herself half naked, placed her drunken, childish head against the breast of Lucan, while he, equally drunk, began to blow the golden powder from her hair, raising upwards his eyes with immense joy. Vestinius, with the stubbornness of a drunkard, was repeating for the tenth time the answer of Mopsus to the sealed letter of the proconsul, while Tullius, who scoffed at the gods, spoke in a diffuse voice, interrupted

by hiccoughs.

"For, if the spheres of Xenophanes is round, then, just think, such a god can be pushed along before you with your foot like a barrel."

But Domitius Afer, an old thief and denunciator, was indignant at this conversation, and from indignation spilled wine over Falernus' tunic. He believed in the gods always. The people say that Rome will perish, and there exist even such who maintain that it is perishing already. And surely! But if this should take place, it would be because the youth has no belief and there cannot exist virtue without belief. The former raw customs were forgotten also and it came into nobody's head, that the Epicureans cannot resist the barbarians. And that is in vain! Concerning himself, he was sorry that he lived till such times and that he was forced to seek in pleasures for defense against his sorrows, which otherwise would finish him up soon.

Saying this he drew towards himself a Syrian dancer, and with his toothless mouth he began to kiss her neck and shoulders, upon seeing which the consul Memmius Regulus laughed, and, raising his bald head dressed with a wreath

on one side, he said:

<sup>&</sup>quot; Who says that Rome is perishing? .... Folly 1.... I, a

consul, know best.... Videant consumes 1. Thirty legions are guarding our pax romana 1...."

Here he placed his fists toward his temples and began to

shout loud enough to be heard in the whole hall:

' Thirty legions! thirty legions I.... From the Britain to the frontiers of the Parthians!"

But suddenly he fell in thought, and, placing a finger to his forehead, he said:

"And I think, even, that there are thirty-two.";...

And he rolled under the table, where in a while he began to vomit the tongues of flamingoes, baked and frozen mushrooms, locusts on honey, fish, meats, and all that he ate or drank.

Domitius, however, was not pacified by the number of legions guarding over the peace of the Romans: "No, no! Rome must perish, for the faith in gods and the crude customs have perished! Rome must perish and it is a pity, for the life is good, anyway; Ceesar is kind, wine is good; ah, what a pity!"

And hiding his face on the shoulders of the Syrian bac-

chante, he wept.

"What do I care for the future life !-.... Achilles was right, that it is better to be a country-servant in the world beneath the sun than to be a king in the Cimerian regions. And this, too, is a question whether there exist any gods,

. though unbelief ruins the youth."

Lucan meanwhile blew away all the golden powder from the hair of Nigidia, who, upon becoming drunk, had fallen asleep. Then he removed wreaths of ivy from a vase standing before him, wrapped the sleeping one into them, and, having finished this deed, he looked at those present with an inquiring and delighted glance.

After this he arrayed himself in ivy, too, repeating in a

voice of deep conviction:

"I am not a man at all, I am a fawn."

Petronius was not drunk, but Nero, who at first drank but little out of consideration for hiß "heavenly" voice, toward the end emptied cup after cup and became drunk. He wanted even to sing his verses again, this time Grecian, but he forgot them, and, by a mistake, he sang the song of Anacreon. Pythagoras, Diodorus and Terpnos accompanied him, but as all did not agree well, they ceased. Nero then

began to be delighted with the beauty of Pythagoras as a connoisseur and an aesthete, and from the enrapture to kiss his hands. "Such beautiful hands he saw only once.. . . of somebody's?"....

And placing his palm to his moist forehead, he began to

remember. After a while, terror was seen upon his face:

"Ah I my mother's ! Agrippina's!"

And dismal visions seized him suddenly.

"They say," he said, " that at night, in the moonlight, she walks on the sea near Baise and Baul. Nothing but she walks,-walks as if seeking something. And when she approaches a boat she looks at it and departs, but the fisherman at whom she gazed, dies."

"Not a bad theme," said Petronius. But Vestinius, stretching out his neck like a crane, whispered mysteriously. "I don't believe in gods, but I do believe in ghosts—Oh!

Oh 1"

But Nero paid no attention to their words, and continued:

<sup>11</sup>1 have practiced the Lemuria. I don't want to see her! This is the fifth year. I had, I was forced to sentence her, for she sent an assassin against me, and if I would not have got the start of her, you would not hear my song to-day."

"Thanks, Caesar. In the name of the city and world,"

exclaimed Domitius Afer.

"Wine! and let them strike the tympans."

The voice began anew. Lucan, all in ivy, wishing to outshout it, rose and began to exclaim:

"I am not a human being, but a fawn, and I dwell in a

forest. E-cho-o-o-o 1"

Finally, Caesar got drunk, and so did the men and women. Vinicius was not less drunk than the others, and in addition, the desire to quarrel began to rise in him, which always happened when be passed the measure. His swarthy face became paler yet and his tongue hampered, when he spoke with a commanding voice:

'1 Give me thy lips! To-day oa to-morrow, is all the same. Enough of all this 1 Caesar took thee from A ulus to present thee to me! Dost thou understand? To-morrow, about dusk, I will send for thee. Dost thou understand? Caesar promised thee to me before he took thee. Thou must be mine! Give me thy lips I I don't want to wait till to-morrow—give me thy lips quick !"

And he embraced her; but Acte began to defend her, and she, too, defended herself with her remaining strength, for she felt that she was perishing. But in vain. She tried with her both hands to take off from her his hairless arm, in vain; with a voice in which grief and fright -were quivering, she implored him not to be such as he is and to have pity on her. His breach over-saturated with wine bedewed her nearer and nearer, and his face approached close to her face. This was no more to her the former good and almost dear soul, Vinicius, but a drunken and evil satyr, who filled her with terror and repulsion.

But her strength left her more and bending, she in vain turned away her face to escape his kisses. He rose, seized her in both his arms, and drawing her head to his breast,

began to press her palid lips to his.

But at this moment some terrible power unwound his arms from her neck, with such ease as if they were the arms of a child, and shoved him aside like a dry twig, or a withered leaf. What happened? Vinicius rubbed his amazed eyes and suddenly perceived above him the gigantic figure of a Lygian called Ursus, with whom he became acquainted in the house of A ulus.

The Lygian stood calmly, but looked at Vinicius so strangely with his blue eyes, that blood stopped in the young man's veins; then the Lygian took the King's daughter in his arms, and with her walked out of the triclinium with a quiet even step.

Acte in that moment went behind him.

Vinicius sat for a twinkle of an eye as if petriified, and then he sprang up and ran toward the exit.

Lygia! Lygia!—

But desire, amazement, fury and the wine tripped up his heels. He staggered once and again, then he seized the naked arm of one of the bacchantes and began to inquire, winking with his eyes:

• 'What happened?

And she, taking a goblet of wine handed it to him with **a** smile in her misty eyes.

> 'Drink!" she said.

Vinicius drank and f el Ido the floor.

The majority of the guests were already laying under the table; others walked around with tottering pace through the

triclinium; others slept on the table, couches, snoring or giving away the excess of the wine, and from the golden network fastened under the ceiling, roses were dropping on the drunken consuls and senators; on the drunken knights, poets, philosophers; on the drunken dancing girls and patrician women; on the members of a society still dominant, but whose soul was dead and whose end was near.

It began to dawn outside.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Nobody stopped Ursus; no one even asked him what he was doing. Those of the guests who were not laying under the table did not keep their places, so the servantry, seeing a giant carrying a guest in his arms, thought that it was some slave bearing out his drunken mistress. Besides Acte went with them, and her presence removed all suspicion.

In that way they went out of the triclinium to the adjoining room, and from there to the gallery leading to Acte's apartments. Strength left Lygia to such a degree that she hung heavily on Ursus' arm. But with the cool, pure morn-

ing air she opened her eyes.

It was growing clearer and clearer outside. After awhile walking through the colonnade they turned to the side portico leading out, not on the courtyard, but on the palace-gardens in which the tops of pinias were seen, and cypresses were already growing ruddy from the morning dawn. That part o/the, building was empty, and the echoes of music and feasters' shouts reached them more and more indistinctly. To Lygia it seemed that she was taken from hell and borne into God's bright world. There was, however, something behind that repulsive triclinium. There was heaven, dawn, light and quietness.

Sudden weeping seized the girl, and clinging close to the giant she began to repeat with sobs:

"Let us go home! Ursus! home!"

Let us go! answered Ursus. Meanwhile they found themselves in a small atrium, belonging to Acte's apartments. There Ursus rested Lygia on a marble bench, not far from the fountain. Acte began to soothe her and to urge to rest, assuring that at present nothing threatened her, for the drunken .feasters will sleep after the feast till evening. But Lygia would not calm herself for some time and pressing her temples with her hands, she repeated like a child;

"Home! to the house of Aulus!" Ursus was ready. It is true that pretorians stood at the gates, but he would pass even if it is so. The soldiers do not stop those who walk out. Before the arch it was crowded with litters. People began to walk out in throngs. Nobody will stop them. They will go out together with the crowd and go straightway home. And besides what does he care? As the daughter of the Kings commands, so it must be. He is here for that purpose. And Lygia kept on repeating: "Yes, Ursus, let us go out!", But Acte had to have reason for both. They will leave! Yes! nobody will stop them. But it is not allowed to escape from Caesar's house and he who does this offends his majesty. Blbl. JaQ

They will leave, but in the evening a centurian at the head of soldiers will bring a death sentence to Aulus, Pomponia Graecina, and will take Lygia back to the palace, and then there will be no rescue for her. If the Auluses will give her shelter under their roof, death awaits them most certainly. Lygia's hands dropped. There was no help for that. She had to choose between her own ruin and that of Plautius. Going to the feast, she hoped that Vinicius and Petronius would by entreating win her from Caesar and give her back to Pomponia. Now she knew that it was they who persuaded Caesar to take her away from Aulus. There was no help for that. Only a miracle could save her from this abyss. Miracle and God's power.

"Acte," she said with despair, "hast thou heard what Vinicius said, that Caesar had given me to him and that to-night he will send slaves for me and take me to his house?"

"I did," said Acte.

And spreading her hands, she was silent. The despair With which Lygia spoke, found no echo in her. She herself had been Nero's mistress. Her heart, though good, could not feel the shame of such a relation. As a former slave she had lived too much in the law of slavery, and besides, she still loved Nero. If he should wish to return to her, she would stretch her arms to him as to happiness.

Understanding now clearly that Lygia either must become the mistress of the young and handsome Vinicius or expose herself and the Auluses to ruin, she could not downright comprehend how the girl could hesitate.

' 'It would not be safer for thee in Caesar's house than in

that of Vinicius."

And it did not occur to her that although she spoke truth, her words signified: '¹ Submit to the fate and become Vinicius' concubine." But to Lygia, who felt on her lips his kisses full of brutal desire and as burning coal, the blood rushed to her face with shame.

"Never!" she exclaimed with an outburst, "I will

neither remain here nor at Vinicius', never!"

Acte was astonished by that outburst.

"But," she asked, "is Vinicius so hateful to thee?"

But Lygia could not answer, for weeping seized her anew. Acte took the girl to her bosom and began to soothe her. Ursus breathed heavily and, balled his giant fists, for loving his king's daughter with the faithfulness of a dog, he could not bear the sight of her tears. In his Lygian, half-wild heart rose the wish to return to the banquet-hall, choke Vinicius, and in the case of need Caesar also; he feared, however, to offer to do this, for his mistress, not being convinced whether such a deed, which at first seemed to him extremely simple, would be suitable for a confessor of the crucified Lamb.

And Acte, having soothed Lygia, again began to question:

"Is he so hateful to thee?"

"No," said Lygia. "It is not allowed me to hate him,

for I am a Christian."

"I know, Lygia. I know also out of the letters of Paul of Tarsus that you are allowed neither to disgrace yourselves, nor to fear the death more than the sin, but tell me if thy teaching permits to give death?"

'No.

"How, then, eanst thou bring Caesar's vengeance on the

A moment of silence followed. The bottomless abyss I opened before Lygia anew; but the young freedwoman continued.

"I ask, for I pity thee and the good Pomponia and Aulus and their child. I have lived long in this house, and know with what Csesar's anger is threatening. No! You can not escape from here. Only one way remains for thee, to implore Vinicius to return thee to Pomponia. But Lygia dropped to her knees to implore some one else. After a moment Ursus, too, knelt down, and they both began to pray in Caesar's house at the morning's dawn.

Acte saw for the first time in her life such a prayer, and could not take her eyes from Lygia, who turned to her with her profile with raised head and arms, looked into the heaven as if awaiting rescue from there. The day-break, cast light on her dark hair and white peplum, reflected in the pupils of her eyes, and she being entirely in the brightness seemed like light. In her pale face, in the open mouth, in the raised arms and eyes, a kind of superhuman ecstasy was visible. And now Acte understood why Lygia could not become a concubine of any one. Before Nero's former mistress it was as if a corner of a veil, which hid an altogether different world from the one to which she was accustomed, was drawn aside.

The prayei' in this house of crime and shame amazed her. A moment ago it seemed to her that there was no rescue for Lygia, but now she began to believe that something extraordinary might happen, that some help might come, so powerful that Caesar himself will not be able to resist it; that some winged armies will descend from heaven to help the girl, or that the' sun will spread beneath her its rays and will draw her to it. She has already heard of many miracles among Christians, and now she thought that evidently all that was true, since Lygia prayed thus.

Lygia rose at last with a face brightened by hope. Ursus too, arose, and standing near the bench looked at his mistress,

awaiting her words.

But her eyes wrere covered with mist, and after a moment

two great tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"May God bless Pomponia and Aulus," she said. "I am not allowed to draw ruin upon them, so I will never see them any more."

Then, turning to Ursus, she began to tell him -that he alone now remained to her in the world; that he must now be her father and guardian. They can not seek shelter at Aulus' house, for they would draw Caesar's anger upon him. But she can neither remain in Csesar's house nor go to

that of Vinicius. So, let Ursus take her, let him lead her out of the city; let him hide her in a place where she would not be found either by Vinicius or his servants. She would follow him everywhere, even beyond seas or mountains, to barbarians, where the Roman name was not yet heard, and where Ceesar's power does not reach. Let him take and save her, for he alone remained to her.

The Lygian was ready, and in sign of obedience, bending down, he embraced her feet. But on the face of Acte, who expected a miracle, disappointment was depicted. Did that prayer only cause that much? To escape from Caesar's house is to commit the crime of offending his majesty, which must be avenged, and even if Lygia would be able to conceal herself Caesar will take vengeance on Aulus. If she wishes to escape let her do so from Vinicius' house. Then Caesar, who dislikes to occupy himself with other people's affairs, perhaps will not wish to help Vinicius in the pursuit, and in any case there will not be a crime of offended majesty.

But Lygia thought so: The Aulus will not even know where she would be; even Pomponia.... She will, however, escape, not from Vinicius' house, but while on the way. He, while drunk, declared to her that in the evening he would send his slaves for her. Probably he spoke the truth, which he .would not confess if he was sober. Evidently he himself, or together with Petronius, saw Caesar before the feast and obtained from him the promise that he will deliver her the next day. And if they would forget this to-day they would send for her to morrow. But Ursus will save her. He will come, bear her out of the litter as he did from the tirclinium, and they will go into the world. Nobody will be able to resist Ursus, even that terrible giant who wrestled yesterday in the triclinium. But as Vinicius can send a great many slaves, Ursus will go at once to the Bishop Linus for advice and help. The bishop will take pity on her, will not leave her in Vinicius' hands, and will command the Christians to go with Ursus to her assistance. They will rescue her and bring her away, and then Ursus will be able to take her out of the city and hide somewhere from Roman power.

And her face began to cover with a blush, and she laughed. Confidence entered her anew, as if the hope of

rescue would change into reality. Suddenly she threw her arms around Acte's neck, and placing her beautiful lips to her cheeks, began to whisper:

"Thou wilt not betray us, Acte, what?"

'¹ By my mother's shade, "answered the freedwoman, ¹ 'I will not betray you, and only beg thy god that Ursus should be able to take thee away."

But the blue childish eyes of Ursus shone with happiness. He was unable to think out anything, though he was breaking his poor head, but such a thing he could not do. And if it was in day or night time, it was all the same to him. ... He will go to the bishop, for the bishop reads in heaven what was necessary and what not. But as to assembling Christians, he would be able to do this himself. He has some acquaintances, slaves and gladiators and freemen, both in the Subura and beyond the bridges. He will collect a thousand or two of them. And he will rescue his mistress and lead her out of the city, and he can go away with her. They will go even to the end of the world, even there where they are from, and where nobody heard of Rome.

Here he began to gaze in front of him as if wishing to perceive some passed and exceedingly distant things, and

then he murmured:

"To the forest? Oh, what a forest, what a forest!"....

But after awhile he shook off the visions.

Well, he will go to the bishop right away, and in the evening will lay in wait with about a hundred men for the litter.

But let even pretorians and not slaves convey her! Better for anyone not to come under his fists, even if in an iron armour—for is iron so strong? If one strikes well the head under it, it can not stand it.

But Lygia with a great, at the same time childish, seriousness raised her finger:

"Do not kill Ursus" she said:

The Lygian put his fist, similar to a maul on the back of his head and began murmuring, rubbing his neck with great embarrassment: "But he must rescue her—his light!" She said herself, that now it was his turn—he will endeavor as much as possible. But if it should happen unwillingly? In any case he must rescue her! Well, if something should happen, he will repent and entreat the Innocent Lamb so

that the Crucified Larub will take pity on him. He would not wish to offend the lamb, but he has such heavy hands.

And tender emotion was depicted on his face, but wishing

to hide it, he bowed and said:

"Now I am going to the holy bishop."

Acte embracing Lygia's neck began to weep. She understood once more that a certain world exists, in the suffering of which even there is more happiness than in all excesses and delights of Caesar's house; once more a kind of a door of light opened before her, but she felt at the same time, that she was not worthy to pass those doors.

### CHAPTER IX.

Lygia was sorry for Pomponia Greecina, whom she loved with her whole soul, and sorry for the whole house of Aulus; her despair, however, passed. She even felt' a kind of sweetness in the thought that for the Truth she was sacrificing plenty and comfort and going to~a wandering and unknown life. Perhaps there was in this a little childish curiosity, what this life would be in distant countries, among barbarians and wild animals; there was, however, a still more deep and confident belief that acting thus she was doing as the Divine teacher ordered, and that from now He Himself will watch over her as over an obedient and faithful child. And in such a case what evil could befall her? If some sufferings will come—she will endure them in His name. Should an unexpected death come, He will take her away, and when Pomponia dies they will be together throughout the whole of eternity.

More than once, in the house of Aulus she vexed her little head, that she, a Christian, could not do anything for this crucified saviour of whom Ursus spoke with such tenderness. But now the moment had arrived. Lygia felt herself almost happy and began to speak of her happiness to Acte, who, however, could not understand her. To forsake everything, to forsake the home, affluence, city, gardens, temples, porticos, everything which is beautiful, to leave the sunny country and friends and for what? In order to

hide from the love of a young and beautiful knight?

These things could not find place in Acte's head. At moments she felt that there was reasonableness in this, that there may even be some gigantic mysterious happiness, but she could not account for it clearly, especially that an event awaited Lygia which might finish badly, in which she could simply lose her life, Acte was timid by nature, and was thinking with fright of what that evening might bring. But she would not speak of her alarms to Lygia, and as the day had become clear and the sun looked into the atrium, she began to persuade Lygia to go to rest after a sleeplessly spent night. Lygia did not resist, and they both entered into the cubiculum, which was spacious and furnished with luxury, in pursuance of Acte's former relations with Caesar. They laid down, one near the other, but Acte, in spite of her weariness, could not fall asleep. She was sad and unhappy, but now a certain disquietness began to seize her which she never before experienced. Hitherto, life seemed to her only difficult and deprived of the morrow; now all at once it seemed to her dishonorable. In her head rose a greater and greater chaos. The doors to the light began now to open, now to close. But in the moment they opened that light dazzled her so that she saw nothing clearly. She rather guessed that in that light there was a certain happiness simply beyond measure, in the presence of which all other is nothing to such a degree that should even Csesar, for example, put away Poppsea and should again fall in love with her, that, even, would be vanity. All at once a thought came to her that Csesar, whom she loved and whom she involuntarily held for a kind of a half-god, was something as paltry as a slave, and that palace with colonnades of Numidian marble little better than a pile of stones. But at last those feelings for whicli she could not account began to torment her. She wished to sleep, but being bothered by disturbance she could not. Finally, thinking that Lygia, above whom so many threats and uncertainties hang, turned to her to converse of her evening .flight. But Lygia was quietly sleeping. In the dark cubiculum, through the curtain, which was not closely drawn, entered a few bright rays in which golden dust was twirling. By the light of these rays her delicate face, leaning on her naked arm, her closed eyes and somewhat opened mouth, could be seen. She was breathing regularly, but she breathed as it is only possible when asleep.

"She sleeps; she can sleep," thought Acte. "She is yet a child."

After a moment, however, it came to her mind that this child prefers to flee rather than become the mistress of Vinicius; prefers poverty to shame, wandering to the magnificent house near Carina, than dresses, jewels, feasts, sound of lutes and cythers.

Why?

And she began to look at Lygia as if wishing to find an answer on her sleeping face. She gazed at her pure forehead, at the serene arch of the brows, at the dark eyelashes, at the parted lips, at the maidens bosom moved by calm breathing, and then she thought again, 'I how different is she from me!"

And Lygia seemed a miracle to her—some divine vision, something beloved of the gods, a hundred fold more beautiful than all the flowers in Caesar's garden or all the sculpture in his palace. But there was no jealousy in the Greek woman's heart. On the contrary, at the thought of the dangers which menaced the girl, a great pity seized her. A certain motherly feeling rose in her. Lygia seemed to her not only beautiful as a dream but at the same time greatly beloved, and, pressing her lips to her dark hair, she began to kiss it.

But Lygia slept calmly, as if in her own house under the guardianship of Pomponia Graecina. And she slept pretty long. The noon had already passed when she opened her blue eyes and began to look around the cubiculum with a great astonishment. Evidently she wondered that she was

not in Aulus' house.

" Is it thou, Acte?" she said, finally perceiving in the darkness the Greek woman's face.

"I, Lygia,"

"Is it evening already?"

"No, child, but the moon has already passed."

"Has not Ursus returned yet?"

'1 Ursus did not say that he would return, but that in the evening he will lay in wait for the litter."

Then they left the cubiculum and went to the bathroom. Acte having bathed Lygia, took her to breakfast and afterward to the palace garden, in which no dangerous meeting was to be feared, for Csesar and his chief courtiers slept

vet.

Lygia, for the first time in her life, saw those magnificent gardens full of cypresses, pinias, oaks, olives and myrtles, among which numerous whitened statues were seen, the mirrorlike ponds gleamed quietly, whole groves of roses bloomed, bedewed by the spray of fountains, where the entrances to the charming grottos were overgrown with ivy or vines, where on the waters swam silver swans, and among statues and trees walked tame gazelles from the deserts of Africa, and rich colored birds from all known countries of the world.

The gardens were empty; only here and there slaves with spades in their hands were working, singing songs in an undertone; others who were granted a moment of rest, sat over near the ponds or in the shade of the oaks in the trembling lights produced by the rays of the sun breaking through the leaves, finally others bedewed the roses or the pale-lily flowers of saffron. Acte with Lygia walked for some time, looking at all the wonders of the gardens, and though Lygia's mind was not at ease, she was yet too much of a child to be able to resist her curiosity and wonder. It even came to her mind that if Csesar would be good, then in such a palace and in such- gardens he could be very happy.

But at last, somewhat tired, they sat on a bench almost entirely hidden in the thicket of cypresses and began to converse of that which weighed on their hearts most, namely: of Lygia's escape in the evening. Acte was much less certain than Lygia about the success of that flight. At moments it even seemed to her that this was a mad intention which cannot but fail. She felt a growing pity for Lygia. It also came to her mind that it would be a hundredfold safer to appease Vinicius. After awhile she began to question her as to when she first knew Vinicius, and if she did not think that he might be entreated to return

her to Pomponia.

But Lygia shook, her dark head sadly.

iNo. In Aulus' house Vinicius was different, he was very good; but since the feast of yesterday I fear him and I prefer to escape to the Lygians."

Acte continued to question: "In Aulus' house he was, however, dear to thee?"

"Yes," answered Lygia, bending hei' head.

'Thou art not a slave, as I was," she said after thinking for a while, "Vinieius might marry thee. Thou art a hostage and a daughter of the King of Lygians. The Aulus' love thee as their own child and I am sure they are ready to accept thee as their own daughter, so Vinieius might marry thee, Lygia."

"I prefer to run away to the Lygians."

' Lygia, dost thou wish that I go at once to Vihicius, awaken him, if he sleeps, and tell him that which I tell thee at this moment?"

"Yes, my dear, I will go to him and say, 'Vinieius, this is a royal daughter and a dear child of the famous Aulus; if thou lovest her, return her to the Aulus', and then take her as a wife from their house.'

Now the girl answered in a voice so calm, that Acte was barely able to hear it:

tears hung on her drooping eye-lashes.

But further conversation was interrupted by the rustle o'f approaching steps, and before Acte had time to see who was coming, Sabina Poppaea appeared before the bench with a small retinue of woman-slaves. Two of them held above her bunches of ostrich feathers, fastened to golden wires; they fanned her lightly, and at the same time shaded her from the still burning autumn sun; before her, an Ethiopian woman, as black as ebony, with bosom convexed as if with milk, bore in her arms a child, wrapped in purple with golden fringes. Acte and Lygia rose, thinking that Poppsea would pass by the bench not paying any attention to them, but she stopped before them and said:

" Acte, the bells which thou hast sewed to the icuncula were badly fastened; the child tore one off and placed it in

its mouth; happily Lilith saw this in time."

"Pardon, 0 divine," answered Acte, crossing her arms on her breast and bending her head.

But Poppaea began to gaze at Lygia.

"What slave is this?" she asked after awhile.

"This is not a slave, 0 divine Augusta, but a foster-daughter of Pomponia Graecina, and daughter of the King of Lygians, given by him as hostage to Rome."

"And she came to visit thee ?"

'1 No, Augusta. She is living in the palace since the day before yesterday."

'•Was she at the-feast last evening?"

"She was, Augusta."
"By whose order?"

"At Ctesar's order."

Poppaea began to look more attentively at Lygia, who stood before her with bent head, now raising her eyes from curiosity, now covering them again with, their lids, All at once a frown appeared on the brows of Augusta. Jealous of her own beauty and power, she was living in constant alarm that some day a fortunate rival might ruin her, as she herself ruined Octavia. Therefore, every beautiful face in the palace roused her suspicion. With the eye of a connoisseur she encompassed at once all parts of Lygia,

"This is simply a nymph," she said to herself. "Venus gave birth to her." And suddenly to her mind came an idea which never occurred to her before at the sight of any beauty: "That she herself was much older!" Wounded self-love quivered within her, alarm seized her, and various

judged every detail of her face, and became frightened.

fears began to pass quickly through her mind.

"May be Nero did not see her, or looking through an emerald has not appreciated her. But what can happen if he will meet her in the day time, in sun-light, so beautiful ?... Moreover, she is not a slave! She is a royal daughter, it is true, of barbarians, but a royal daughter!... 0, immortal gods! She equally beautiful as I, but younger 1" And the frown between the brows deepened, and her eyes began to shine from under the golden lashes with a cold gleam.

But turning to Lygia she began to ask, with a seeming

calmness:

"¿Hast thou spoken with Caesar?"

"No, Augusta."

"Why dost thou prefer to be here than with Aulus?"

"I do not prefer, lady. Petronius persuaded Caesar to take me away from Pomponia, but I am here against my will, O, lady!

"And wouldst thou wish to return to Pomponia?"

The last question Poppaea gave with softer and milder voice, hence hope suddenly entered Lygia's heart.

"Lady," she said, stretching her arms to her, " Cassar promised to give me to Vinicius as a slave, but do intercede for me and return me to Pomponia."

"Then it was Petronius who persuaded Caesar to take

thee away from Aulus and give thee to Vinicius?"

"Yes, lady, Vinicius is to send for me to-day; but thou

take pity on me."

Saying this, she stooped down and seizing the edge of Poppsea's dress, awaited for her word with beating heart, but Poppsea looked at her with a face brightened by an evil smile, and then said:

" 'Then I promise thee that to-day thou wilt become

Vinicius' slave.'

And she went away, like a beautiful but evil vision. Only the wail of the child, which for some unknown reason, began to cry, reached Lygia's and Acte's ears.

Lygia's eyes were also filled with tears, but after a mo-

ment she seized Acte's hand and said:

"Let us return. No help is to be looked for here.

And they returned to the atrium, which they did not leave till the evening. When it darkened and the slaves brought in quadruple fire-pots with great flames, they were both very pale. Their conversation ceased. Both were listening if

somebody was approaching.

Lygia repeated incessantly that although she was sorry to forsake Acte, since Ursus, must already wait in the dark, she would prefer that everything should take place to-day. Her breathing, however, grew quicker and louder. Acte feverishly collected such jewels as she could, and wrapping them in a corner of her peplum, implored her not to refuse this gift and this means of escape.

At intervals came a deep silence, broken by vague sounds. It seemed to both of them that they heard some one whisper behind the curtain, now the distant wail of a ciflld,

now the barking of dogs.

Suddenly the curtain from the ante-chamber moved without noise, and a tall, dark man with a face marked by smallpox appeared like a ghost in the atrium. In one moment Lygia recognized Atacinus, a freedman of Vinicius, who at times came to the house of Aulus.

Acte screamed, but Atacinus bowed-low and said:

<sup>11</sup> A greeting to divine Lygia from Marcus Vinicius, who awaits her with a feast in the house adorned in green."

The girl's lips whitened.

"I go," she said.

And she threw her arms around Acte's neck for farewell.

# CHAPTER X.

And indeed, the house of Vinicius was adorned with the green of myrtle and ivy which was hung on the walls and doors. The columns were wreathed with scrolls. In the atrium, above the opening of which were fastened woolen purple curtains as protection from the night dampness, it was as clear as in day time. Eight and twelve flamed firepots were burning, they were shaped in the form of vessels, faces, animals, birds or statues holding the Camps, filled with odoriferous oil, cut out of alabaster, of marble, of gilded Corinthian copper, not as wonderful as that famous candlestick used by Nero and taken from Apollo's temple, but beautiful and made by famous masters. Some of the fire-pots were shaded by Alexandrian glass or by transparent webs from the Indus of red, blue, yellow and violet color so that the whole atrium was full of various colored rays. Everywhere the odor of nard was perceptible, to which Vinicius was accustomed and to which he took a liking in the Orient. The depth of the house in which the forms of male and female slaves were swarming, also shone with light. In the triclinium the table was prepared for four persons, for besides Vinicius and Lygia, Petronius and Chrysothemis were to participate in the feast. Vinicius followed in everything the words of Petronius, who advised him not to go for Lygia, but to send Atacinius with the permission obtained from Caesar, and to receive her himself, and receive her politely and even with signs of honor.

"Yesterday, thou wert drunk," he said to him- "I saw thee: thou didst behave like a stone-cutter from the Albanian mountains. Do not be . too urgent, and remember that one must drink a good wine slowly. Also know, that it is

sweet to desire, but still sweeter, is to be desired."

Chrysothemis had her own opinion of the circumstance, but Petrohius, calling her his vestal and dove, began to explain fo her the difference which must exist between a skillful circus driver and a man, who, for the first time in his life, mounts a quadriga. Then turning to Vinicius, he continued: "Gain her confidence, cheer her up, be magnanimous with her. I would not wish to see a sad feast. Even swear to her by Hades that thou wilt return her to Pomponia, and it will be thy affair, that the next day she will prefer to remain rather than return.

Then pointing to Chrysothemis, he added:

"For five years I acted thus with this coy turtle-dove, and I can not complain against her fierceness."

At that, Chrysothemis touched him with her fan of pea-

cock feathers and said:

"But did not I resist, thou satyr!

"Out of consideration for my predecessor."

"But wert thou not at my feet?"

"In order to put rings on thy toes."

Chrysothemis involuntarily looked at her feet, on the toes of which glittered sparks of jewels, and, together with Petronius, they began to laugh. But Vinicius did not listen to their quarrel. His heart was beating uneasily under the wonderful robe of a Syrian priest, in which he had dressed himself to receive Lygia.

"They must have left' the palace," said Vinicius as if to

himself.

' They most surely did, "answered Petronius. ' Perhaps I shall relate to thee of the predictions of Appollonius of Tania or that story of Rufinus, which I do not know why I did not finish."

But Vinicius cared no more for Apollonius of Tania than for the history of Ruiinus. His mind was on Lygia, and though he felt that it was more becoming to receive her at his home than to go in the role of a myrmidon to the palace, he, however, regretted at moments that he did not go, if only to be able to see her sooner and sit near her in the darkness in the double litter.

Meanwhile the slaves brought on a tripod ornamented with rams' heads, bronze dishes with coal, on which they began

to throw small bits of myrrh and nard.

"Now they are already turning to Carinae," said Vinicius.

"He will not hold out; he will run to meet her and is likely to pass them," exclaimed Chrysothemis. Vinicius smiled distractedly and said:

"On the contrary, I will hold out."

But his nostrils began to quiver and his breathing labored, seeing which, Petronius shrugged his shoulders.

"There is not one sestertium of a philosopher in him, and

I will never make a man out of this son of Mars."

Vinicius did not even hear this.

'They are now already on the Carinae!"

And in fact they turned to the Carinas. Slaves, called lam padarii, were walking in front, others called pedisequii, on both sides of the litter, while Atacinus was close behind it,

keeping an eye upon the procession.

But they moved slowly, for in a city which was not lighted at all, the lanterns showed the way badly. Moreover, the streets near the palace were empty, scarcely a man passed with a lantern, but farther on the streets were unusually lively. From every back-street people in threes or fours were coming out, and all without torches, all in dark mantles.

Some walked with the procession, intermingling with the slaves, others in larger crowds appeared from the opposite directions. Some staggered like drunkards. At times progressive became so difficult that the "lampadarii" began

to shout:

"Place for the noble tribune, Marcus Vinicius!" Lygia saw through the curtains drawn aside those crowds, and she began to shiver from emotion. She was seized alternately now by hope, now by fright. "That is he! that is Ursus and the Christians-. 0 Christ help! 0 Christ save!" But Atacinus also who at first paid no attention to the unusual animation of the street, began at last to grow alarmed. There was something strange in this. The lampadarii had to shout oftener and oftener: "Place for the litter of the noble tribune!" From the sides unknown people pushed against the litter so that Atacinus ordered the slaves to chase them away with canes. Suddenly cries were heard in the front of the procession; in a moment all lights went out. Near the litter commenced a rush, an uproar and a struggle.

Atacinus understood it was simply an attack. And having understood this he quaked with fear. It was known to

all that oftentimes Caesar, in company with Augustinas,

were robbing in the Subura for amusement and in other parts of the city. It was known that even at times he brought from those nightly excursions bruises and botches, but he who defended himself went to death, even if he was a senator. The house of the vigilus, whose duty was to watch over the city, was not far away, but during similar events the guards pretended to be deaf and blind. Meanwhile it was seething near the litter; the people began to struggle, strike, throw and trample each other. The thought flashed to Atacinus that before all it was necessary to save Lygia and himself, and to leave the rest to fate. And so, drawing her out of the litter, he seized her in his arms and endeavored to slip out in the darkness. But Lygia began to shout: "Ursus! Ursus!"

She was dressed in white, so it was easy to see her. Atacinus with his free arm tried to throw over her his own mantle hastily, when suddenly terrible tongs seized his neck,

and a gigantic shattering mass fell on his head.

He dropped in an instant, like one stricken with an axe before the altar of Jove.

The slaves for the greater part were laying on the ground, or were saved by escaping into the darkness.

Only the litter smashed in the uproar remained on the spot. Ursus was bearing Lygia away to the Subura, while his companions followed him gradually scattering on the way.

The slaves began to assemble before Vinicius' house and take counsel. They did not dare to enter. After a short consultation they returned to the place of encounter where they found several dead bodies and among them that of Atacinus. This one was yet quivering, but after a momentarily stronger convulsion he stretched himself and remained motionless. They took him away and returning stopped again before the gate. It was, however, necessary to notify the master what had happened.

"Let Gulo announce"—some voice whispered—"blood is flowing from his face as it is from ours and the master

loves him."

And the German, Gulo, an old slave who had nursed Vinicius, and. was inherited by the latter from his mother, sister of Petronius, said:

' I will announce, but let us all go. May his anger not

fall on me alone."

Vinicius was already growing impatient. Petronius and Chrysothemis jeered at him, but he was walking with a swift pace through the atrium, repeating: "They ought to be here already!" And he wished to go but the others detained him. Suddenly steps were heard in the anteroom, and the slaves rushed in a crowd into the atrium, and stopping quickly under the walk, raised their hands, and began to repeat with stammering voices—Aaaa!....aa!

Vinicius sprang to them:

"Where is Lygia?"—he cried, with a terrible and changed voice.

"Aaaa!"

All at once Gulo pushed forward with his bloody face, calling hastily and sadly:

"Here is our blood, lord! We defended! Here is our

blood, lord—here is our blood!"

But he was unable to finish, for Vinicius seized a bronze candelabra and with one blow crushed the skull of the slave, then clasping his head with his hands, he drove his fingers into his hair, repeating huskily: "Memiserum! Me miserum!" His face grew livid, his eyes glassy, foam appeared on his lips.

"Rods!!!" he roared with an inhuman voice. "Lord!

Aaaa! take pity," groaned the slaves.
-Petronius rose with an expression of disgust on his face.

"Come Chrysothemis," he said "if thou wishest to look at flesh, I will order the shop of a butcher on the Carinses opened." And he went out of the atrium, while in the whole house adorned with green of ivies, and ready for a feast, were heard groans, and whistling of rods, which lasted almost till the morning.

## CHAPTER XI.

That night Vinicius did notlie down at all. Some time after Petronius left, when the groans of the lashed slaves could not soothe either his pain nor his rage, he assembled a crowd of other servants, and at their head, although it was late in the night, rushed out in researches for Lygia. He visited the Esquilin neighborhood, then the Subura, Vicus Seleratus.

and all adjoining lanes. After, which, passing around the capitol, he reached an island by the bridge of Fabricius; after that he ran over the Trans-Tiber part of the city. But it was a chase without object, having himself no hope of finding Lygia, and if he sought her he done this chiefly to pass away the terrible night. And so he returned home only at daybreak, when w'agons and mules of vegetable-dealers began to appear in the city, and when the bakers were already opening their stores. On returning lie ordered Gulo's body to be taken away, which nobody dared to touch hitherto; afterwards those slaves from whom Lygia had been taken away he commanded to be sent to the rural ergastulum, which was a more terrible punishment than death; finally throwing himself upon the upholstered bench in the atrium, he began to think confusedly by what means he would find and take Lygia.

To renounce her, to lose her, not to see her any more, seemed to him an impossibility, and at the very thought of this, frenzy seized him. The absolute nature of the young soldier for the first time in his life met a resistance, another unbending will, and simply could not understand that some one had dared to stand athwart his desire. Vinicius would prefer that the world and the city would fall to ruins rather than he should not attain that which he wished. The cup of delight was taken almost from his lips, and therefore it seemed to him that something unheard of had happened—something which cried for vengeance to divine and human

laws.

But before all could he could not become reconciled with his fate, for never in his life did he desire anything as he did Lygia. It seemed to him that he would be unable to exist without her. He could not answer to himself what he would do without her to-morrow, nor how would he be able to survive the following days. At times he was seized with rage against her, which approached madness. He would like to beat her, to drag her by the hair to the cubiculums to gratify his wanton cruelty on her; then again he was seized by a terrible yearning for her voice, her form, her eyes, and he fe'lt that he was ready to lay at her feet. He called for her, he gnawed his fingers, embraced his head with his hands. He tried to compel! himself to think calmly of her recovery, but he could not.

Through his head flew thousands of means and ways, one more mad than another. Finally a thought flashed in him that no one else rescued her but Aulus; that in any case Aulus knew where she was hiding. And he sprang up to run to the house of Aulus. If they will not render her to him, if they will not fear threats, he will go to Casar, shall accuse the old commander of disobedience, and shall obtain a death sentence against him, but before this he would draw the confession where Lygia was. But should they even render her voluntarily, he would nevertheless revenge himself. It is true they received and nursed him in their house, but this was nothing. By this one wrong they freed him from any gratitude. Here his revengeful and rancorous soul began to exult with the thought of Pomponia Grsecina's despair when a centurian would bring a death sentence to old Aulus. He was almost certain he would obtain it. Petronius would help him in this. Moreover, Caesar never denies anything to his companion Augustian unless personal dislike or desire commands him to refuse. And suddenly his heart almost died in him under the influence of a terrible supposition. And what if Caesar himself has captured Lygia?

All knew that Caesar from weariness sought diversion in night robbery. Even Petronius participated in these amusements. Their main object, it is true, was to seize women and toss them on soldier's mantels until they fainted. However, Nero himself sometimes called these expeditions " pearl fishing," for it happened that in the depths of the districts occupied by the swarming poor populace were often caught real pearls of grace and youth. Then, "sagatio," as the tossing in soldier's mantles was called, changed to real capture, and the 1 ' pearl " was sent either to the Palatine or one of Caesar's innumerable villas, or finally Nero surrendered her to one of his comrades. So it would happen with Lygia also. Caesar had looked at her during the feast, and Vinicius doubted not for an instant that she must have seemed to him the most beautiful woman he had hitherto ' seen. How could it be otherwise? It is true Nero had her in the Palatine and could have kept her openly; but, as Petronius said rightly, Caesar ha'd no courage in crime, and though being able to act openly, he always preferred to act secretly. This time fear of Poppaea might also have inclined

him to this. It now came into Vinicius' head that perhaps Aulus would not dare to capture by force the girl presented to him by Caesar. Besides, who would dare? May be that gigantic Lygian with blue eyes would, who had dared to enter the triclinium and bear her out from the feast in his arms. But where would he take refuge with her—where could he bring her? No, a slave would not bring this about. Hence no one else has done this except Caesar. At this thought Vinicius' eyes became dim and drops of sweat covered his forehead. In such a case Lygia was lost forever. One could wrest her from all other hands, but not from such. Now, with more reasonableness than before, he

OUO VADIS.

1 1 Car

could repeat: " El misero mihi! " His imagination represented to him Lygia in Nero's arms, and for the first time in his life he understood that there are thoughts which a man cannot endure. Only now he recognized how he loved her. As the whole life flashes with lightning rapidity through the memory of a drowning man, so Lygia began to pass through his. He saw her. He heard her every word. He saw her near the fountain, he saw her with Aulus, and at the feast. He again felt her near; he felt the odor of her hair, the warmth of her body, the delight of the kisses with which at the feast he pressed her innocent lips. She seemed to him a hundred times more beautiful, more desirable, and sweeter than ever; the only one chosen from among all mortals and all divinities. And when he thought that Nero might possess all this, which had become ingrafted in his heart as to be almost his blood and his life, a racking pain seized him, so terrible that he wanted to beat his head against the walls of the atrium till it would break. He felt that he was going mad, and he would most surely have gone mad if revenge had not yet remained to him. But as before it seemed to him that he would be unable to live if he could not regain Lygia, and that he would be unable to die before h revenges her. " I will be thy Cassius, Cherea!" he repeated to himself, thinking of Nero. After seizing in his hands earth from the flower-vases surrounding the impluvium, he made a dreadful vow to Erebus, Hecate and his own houselares that he would execute vengeance. And really, he experienced' relief. He had at least something to live for and to fill in the nights and days.

Then deferring the intention to go to the Aulus', he gave orders to bear him to the Palatine. On the way he thought that if they would not admit him to Cmsar, or if they wished to ascertain if he had no weapons on him, that would be proof that Lygia was captured by Casar. However, he took no weapon. He lost his presence of mind in general, but as usual with people who are possessed of one idea, he thought only of revenge.

He did not wish that it should pass prematurely; however, he wished before all to see Acte, for he judged that he could find out the truth from her. At moments the hope flashed past him that perhaps he will also see Lygia, and at that thought he began to tremble. What if Caesar captured her not knowing who she was, and will return her to him to-day? But after a while he cast aside that supposition. If he wished to send her to him he might have done so yesterday. Acte alone could clear up everything, and it was necessary to see her before all others. Being convinced of that he ordered the slaves to hasten their steps. On the way he meditated without reason, now of Lygia, now of revenge. He heard that priests of Egyptian goddess', Pasht, know how to bring about sicknesses on whom they wished, and he resolved to learn from them the means for it. In the Orient it was also said that the Jews had certain adjurations by which they could cover the bodies of their enemies with ulcers. Among his slaves he had a dozen Jews, hence he promised himself that he would have them lashed on his return until they reveal to him this secret. But with the greatest delight he thought of the short Roman sword, which causes streams of blood, such as flowed from Caius Caligula and created ineffaceable stains on the portico's column. He was now ready to murder the whole of Rome, and if some revengeful gods should have promised him that all the people will die except he and Lygia, he would agree to

Before the arch he collected his whole presence of mind and at sight of the pretorian guard he thought that if they should make even the least difficulty in the entrance, it would be a proof that Lygia was in the Palace by Ceesar's command. But the chief centurion smiled at him amicably, and advancing a few paces, said:

"Be greeted, noble Tribune. If thou wishest to bow to

Caesar, thou hast chosen a bad moment, and I don't know whether thou wilt be able to see him."

"What has happened?" asked Vinicius.

"The divine little Augusta fell ill, unexpectedly, since yesterday. Caesar and Augusta Poppeea are with her, together with physicians, which were called from all over the city."

This was an important event. Caesar, when his daughter was born to him, simply went mad from happiness and received hei' with extra humanum gaudium. Previously, the senate recommended Popprea's womb to the gods. Votives were made, and in Antium, where the birth took place, magnificent games were held, and besides this, a temple to the two Fortuna's was erected. Nero, who knew no bounds in anything, loved this child beyond measure. To Poppaea, it was also dear, even for this, that it strengthened her position and made her influence irresistible.

On the health and life of the little Augusta the fate of the whole empire might depend, but Vinicius was so occupied with himself, with his own affair and his own love, that almost paying no attention to the news of the centurion, he answered:

"I only wish to see Acte"

And he passed.

But Acte was also occupied at the child's side, and he had to wait long for her. She came about noon, with a tired and wearied face, which at the sight of Vinicius grew more pale.

"Acte" exclaimed Vinicius, seizing her hands, and drawing her to the middle of the atrium, "Where is Lygia?"
"I wanted to ask thee about her," she answered, looking into

his eyes with reproach.

And he, though he promised himself that he would inquire calmly, again pressed his head with his palms, and began to repeat, with his face contracted by pain and anger:

"She is gone! She was captured from me on the way!" After a moment, however, he recovered his senses, and com-

ing close to Acte began to speak through his set teeth:

"Acte, if life is dear to thee, if thou wishest not to become the cause of misfortunes, which thou even art not able to imagine—answer me the truth: Did not Caesar capture her?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Caesar did not leave the palace yesterday."

"By the shade of thy mother, by all the gods! Is she not

in the palace?"

1 ' By the shade of my, mother, Marcus, she is not in the palace, and it was not Caesar who seized her. The little Augusta fell ill since yesterday, and Nero did not go. away from the cradle."

Vinicius drew his breath. That which seemed to him the

most terrible ceased to threaten him.

"And so," he said, sitting on the bench and clinching his fists, "the Aulus' intercepted her, and in that case woe to

them!"

Il Aulus Plautius was here this morning. He could not see me for I was occupied at the infant's side, but he inquired of Epaphroditus and others of the imperial servantry about Lygia, and announced to them that he would come again to see me."

<sup>11</sup> He wished to turn the suspicion away from himself. If he did not know what happened to Lygia, he would

come to look for her in my house.""

"He left me a few v/ords on a tablet, from which thou wilt see that knowing that Lygia was taken from his house through Ceesar at thine and Petronius' request, he expected that she would be sent to thee, and this morning was in thy house where he was told what happened."

Saying this she went to the cubiculum, and after a mo-

ment returned with the tablet left to her by Aulus.

Vinicius read the tablet and became silent, while Acte seemed to read the thoughts in his gloomy face, for, after a moment, she said:

" No, Marcus. That happened which Lygia herself

wished."

"Thou knewest that she wished to escape!" burst forth Vinicius. And she looked at him with her dim eyes almost sternly.

"I knew that she did not wish to become thy concubine."

"And what was thou during all thy life?"

"I was a slave before."

But Vinicius did not cease to rage. Cmsar gave him Lygia, so he does not need to ask what she was before. He would find her even under the ground, and will make her do everything he pleases. So it is! She will be his concubine. He will give an order to flog her, as often

as it pleases him. When he becomes weary of her, he will give her to the last of his slaves, or .will cominand her to turn a hand-mill, in his estates in Africa. He will seek her now and will find her, only to crush, to trample and to humble her.

And growing more and more excited he was losing every idea of sense to such a degree, that even. Acte recognized that he was promising more than he was able to execute, and that anger and torment possessed him. She would have pity for torment, but his uncontrollable rage exhausted her patience, so that finally she asked him why he had come to her?

Vinicius found no answer immediately. He came to her, for he wished so, for he thought that she would give him some news, but really he came to Caesar, and not being able to see him, he called for her. Lygia, running away, resisted Caesar's will, so he will implore him to give orders to seek for her in the whole city and dominion, even if he has to use all his legions for this, and to ransack in turn every house in the empire; Petronious would support his request, and the researches would commence from this day.

To this Acte said:

'1 Take care, not to loose her forever, when she will be found at Caesar's will."

Vinicius wrinkled his brows:

What does that signify? he asked. <sup>11</sup> Listen to me Marcus! Yesterday, we were with Lygia in the palace-gardens and we met Poppae and with her the little Augusta carried by the Negress Lilith. In the evening the child grew sick, and Lilith asserts that it became bewitched and that this foreign woman bewitched her whom they met in the gardens. If the child recovers they will forget that but in the opposite case Poppae will be the first to accuse Lygia of witchcraft and then wherever she will be found there will be no rescue for her." A moment of silence followed, then Vinicius said:

"And may be she bewitched her: She bewitched me too."

• Lilith repeats that the child at once cried when she bore it past us. And true! It began to weep. Most surely it was already sick in the gardens.

Marcus, seek for her thyself where thou wishest, but until the little Augusta recovers do not speak of her to Caesar for thou wilt draw on her Poppie's revenge. Her eyes have wept enough through thee and may all gods guard her poor head now."

"Thou lovest her Acte?" asked Vinicius gloomily.

And tears shone in the freedwoman's eyes.

"Yes! I love her."

"For sh'e did not repay thee with hatred as she did me."

Acte looked at him for a moment as if hesitating, or as if wishing to ascertain whether he spoke sincerely, then she answered:

" **0**, passionate and blind man—she loved thee.-"

Vinicius sprang up under the influence of these words, as though possessed.

"It is not true!" she hated him.

How could Acte know? Did Lygia, after one day of acquaintance, make a confession to her? What love is this which prefers wandering in shame of poverty, uncertainty of the morrow, and perhaps also a wretched death, to a wreathed house in which the beloved awaits her with a feast? It is better for him not to listen to such things, for he is already half mad. He would not have given that girl away for all the treasures of this palace, and she\_ran away. What love is this which fears delight and brings forth pain? Who will conceive this? Who can understand this? If not for the hope that he will find her, he would sink a sword in himself! Love surrenders but does not take away. There were moments at Aulus' house that he himself believed in near happiness, but now he knew that she hated him, still hates, and will die with hatred in her heart.

But Acte, usually timid and mild, burst forth in turn with

indignation.

How did he try to gain her? Instead of bowing for her to Aulus and Pomponia, he took the child away from her parents by a cunning trick. He wished to make her not a wife, but a concubine; her, a foster-daughter of a respectable house; her a royal daughter. And he brought her to this house of crime and ignominy, polluted her innocent eyes with the sight of a shameless feast, he acted with her as with a strumpet. Has he forgotten what the house of Aulus was, and who was Pomponia G-raecina, who reared Lygia? Has not he enough sense to understand that there are other kinds of women than Nigidia, than Calvia Crispinilla, than Poppsea,

and than all those which he meets at Ctesar's house? Has not he, seeing Lygia, at once understood that this is a pure

maiden, who prefers death to infamy?

How does he know what gods she worships, and if they are not better and purer than the wanton Venus'or Isis which are worshiped by profligate Roman women? No! Lygia made no confessions to her, but told her that she expected to-be rescued from Vinicius; she had hopes that he would obtain for her the privilege of returning-home, and that he would restore her to Pomponia. And speaking of that she blushed like a girl who loves and has confidence. Her heart also beat for him, but she became disheartened and let him now look for her with the aid of Caesar's soldiers; but let him know that if Poppaea's child dies, then suspicion would fall on Lygia, and her ruin will be inevitable.

Emotion began to overcome the anger and pain of Vinicius. The knowledge that Lygia loved him shook his soul to fits depths. He recalled her in the garden of Aulus, when she listened to his words with blushes on her cheeks and with eyes full of light. It seemed to him that she really began to love him then, and at this thought suddenly a feeling of a certain happiness seized him, a hundredfold greater than that which he desired. He thought he could indeed have her yielding and loving. He would have wreathed his doors and anointed them with wolf fat, and then sat her as a wife on the sheepskin at his fireside. He would have heard from her lips the sacramental, " where thou art, Caius, there am I;" and she would remain forever in his house. Why did he not act thus? Was he not ready? And mow she is gone and he may not find her, and should he find her he may loose her, and every should he not loose her neither the Aulus nor she would have him. Here anger began again to raise the hair on his head, but this time the anger was not turned against the Aulus', nor Lygia, but against Petronius. He was to blame for everything. Only for him Lygia would not need to wander, she would be his betrothed and no danger would hang over her dear head. But now all was over, and it was too late to repair the evil which cannot be repaired—11 Too late!"

And it seemed to him that an abyss had opened under his

feet. He did not know what to undertake, how to act,

where to go. Acte repeated like an echo, "Too late!" which, from strange lips, sounded to him like a death sentence. He only understood one thing—that he must find Lygia, or otherwise something evil would happen to him. And, wrapping himself mechanically, in his toga, he wished to leave-not even taking farewell of Acte-when, .all at once, the curtain separating the ante-chamber from the atrium was pushed aside, and he saw before him the doleful figure of Pomponia Graecina. Evidently she also knew of Lygia's disappearance, and, thinking that for her it would be easier than for Aulus to see Acte, she came to her for news.

But perceiving Vinicius, she turned her pale face to him, and, after a moment, said:

"Marcus, may God forgive thee the wrong which thou hast done to us and to Lygia 1"

And he stood with a drooping head, with a feeling of misfortune and guilt, unable to understand what God it was that could forgive him, nor why Pomponia spoke of forgive-

ness when she ought to speak of revenge.

And finally he went out, with his head full of gloomy forbodings, anxiety, and sorrow. In the court and under the gallery stood uneasy crowds of people. Among the palace slaves were seen knights and senators, who came to inquire about the health of the little Augusta, and at the same time to show themselves in the palace and lay down the proof of their solicitude even in the presence of Caesar's slaves. The news of the illness of the "Goddess" evidently spread quickly, for more and more figures were appearing at the gate, and whole crowds were seen through the arch opening. Some of the arrivals, seeing that Vinicius was coming out of the palace, endeavored to stop him for news; but he, without answering, walked ahead until Petronius, who also came for news, almost struck him with his breast and stopped him.

Vinicius would infallibly have become enraged at sight of Petronius, and committed some injustice in Caesar's palace, if he was not coming from Acte broken hearted, and in such a state of exhaustion and so overwhelmed, that for the moment even his inborn vehemence was lacking. He pushed Petronius aside and wished to pass, but the latter

stopped him almost by force;

"How is the divine?"

But that question angered Vinicius again and stirred him up in a moment.

" May hell swallow hei and the whole house," he answered,

setting his teeth.

1 'Silence, unhappy!" said Petronius, and looking around, added hurriedly:

"If thou wishest to know something of Lygia, then come with me. No! I will tell nothing here! Come with me,

I will tell thee my suspicions in the litter."

And putting his arm around the young man, he led him hastily out of the palace. But this was what he was mostly concerned about, for he had no news whatever. But being a resourceful man, and having in spite of his indignation of last evening much sympathy for Vinicius, and finally feeling himself in some measure responsible for everything which happened, he had already undertaken something, and when they seated themselves in the litter, said:

'I ordered my slaves to watch at every gate, giving them an accurate description of the girl and that giant who bore her out from Caesar's feast, for there is no doubt that he has rescued her. Listen to me! May be that the Aulus' will wish to hide her in one of their rural estates, and in that case we will k'how in what direction they will lead her. If, however, they do not notice them at the gate, this will be the proof that she remained in the city, and to-day we will begin researches."

"The Aulus' do not know where she is," answered

Vinicius.

"Hast thou the certainty that it is so?"

"I saw Pomponia. They seek for her, also."

" She could not leave the city yesterday, for the gates are closed at night. Two of my men are watching at every gate. One has to follow Lygia and the giant, the other will return at once to give notice. If she is in town we will find her, for it is easy to recognize that Lygian even by his. stature and shoulders. Thou art happy that Cmsar did not capture her, and I can assure thee of that, for there are no secrets kept from me in the Palatine. But Vinicius burst forth with sorrow still more than with anger, and with a voice interrupted by emotion began to relate to Petronius what he heard from Acte, and what new dangers hang over Lygia's head, so terrible that in case they found the deserters, it would be necessary to hide her most carefully from Poppaea. Then he began to reproach Petronius bitterly for his advises. Only for him everythin" would have gone dif-ferently. Lygia would be with the Aulus' and he, Vinicius, could see her every day, and to-day would be happier than Caesar, and growing excited as he proceeded with his narrative, he yielded more and more to emotion, till finally tears of sorrow and rage began to gather in his eyes.

Petronius, who had not even expected that the young man could love with such intensity of feeling, seeing these tears

of despair, spoke to himself with astonishment:

o powerful lady of Cyprus, thou alone rulest gods and menl"

#### CHAPTER XII.

But when they alighted before Petronius' house, the atrium overseer told them that none of the slaves sent to the gates had yet returned. Atriensis commanded to bring them food and a new order, that under penalty .of lashes, they were to carefully watch all who were leaving the city.

"Thou seest," said Petronius, "they are undoubtedly in the city yet, and in that case we will find them. But order also thy men to watch at the gates, especially those who were sent for Lygia, for those will easily recognize her."

'11 ordered them to be sent to the rural ergastulum, "said Vinicius, '1 but I will revoke the order right away; let

them go to the gates."

And writing a few words on a wax covojed tablet, he handed it to Petronius, who gave orders that it be immediately sent to Vinicius' house.

Then they passed to the interior portico, and there, taking seats on a marble bench, began to converse.

The golden-haired Eunice and Iras placed bronze stools under their feet, and placing a table near the bench, poured wine for them into goblets from Wonderful narrow-necked pitchers, which were imported from Volaterra? and Caecina.

1 ' Hast thou among thy men someone who would know that gigantic Lygian?" asked Petronius.

"Atacinus and Gulo know him, but Atacinus fell yesterday by the litter, and Gulo was killed by me."

"I am sorry for him"-said Petronius "He carried in his

arms not onlj' thee, but me also."

"I even wished to free him"—answered Vinieius—"but never mind that. Let us speak of Lygia. Rome is a sea. "But it is in the sea where pearls are found.... Probably we will not find her to-day, or to-morrow; however, we will find her in the end. Thou accusest me at present of being the cause of this trouble. The plan itself was good, but became evil only then when it turned to evil. Hast thou not heard from Aulus himself, that he intended to take up residence in Sicily with his whole family? In that case the girl would be far away from thee anyhow."

"I would have followed them—" answered Vinieius—"and in any case she would be safe, but now, if that infant dies, Popprna will herself believe and will make Csesar believe that

it occurred through Lygia's guilt."

"It is so. This too alarmed me. But that little puppet may recover. But should it die, even then we will find some means."

Here Petronius meditated for a while, and then said:

"Poppsea confesses, it is asserted, the religion of the Jews and believes in evil spirits. Caesar is superstitious.... If we spread the news that evil spirits captured Lygia, that news will be believed especially when neither Caesar, nor Aulus Plautius intercepted her. She disappeared really mysteriously. The L.ygian alone could not do that. He must have had assistance, and how could a slave in the course of one day assemble so many men?"

"The slaves are helping one another in Rome"

"Which they will pay for with their blood some day, True! They assist one another but notone against another, and here it was known that responsibility and punishment would fall on thy slaves. If thou wilt submit to thy men the idea of evil spirits, they will at once confirm that they saw them with their own eyes, for that will justify them in thy eyes at once. Ask one for a test, if he did not see how the spirits carried Lygia through the air, and by the aegis of Zeus he will swear on the spot that it was so."

Vinieius who was also superstitious, looked at Petronius

with a sudden alarm.

"If Ursus could not nave men to assist him, and could neither capture her alone, who then captured her?"

But Petronius began to laugh.

"Thou seest," he said, "they will believe when thou believest this, half and half. Such is our world which jeers the gods. They will believe and will not seek for her, and meanwhile we shall place her somewhere far away from the city in my or thy villas."

"But, indeed, who could help her?"

"Her believers," answered Petronius. "What divinity does she worship? I ought to know better of that than thou."

"Almost every woman in Rome worships a different God. It is certain that Pomponia brought her up in the faith of that divinity she herself confesses, but which one she confesses I know not. One thing is sure, that no one saw her in any of our temples making offerings. She was even accused of being a Christian, but that is impossible. A domestic court cleared her from that charge. They say of Christians that they not only worship the head of an ass, but are enemies of the human genus and commit abominable crimes. Therefore, Pomponia cannot be a Christian, for her virtue is known, and an enemy of man kind would treat the slaves differently."

"In no house are they treated as in Aulus'," interrupted

Vinicius.

<sup>1</sup> 'So thou seest. Pomponia mentioned to me of some God which is said to be one, almighty and merciful. W<sup>T</sup>here she has hidden all the others is her affair; it is enough to say that this, her Logos, could not be very almighty, or rather must have been very useless if he had only two worshipers, Pomponia and Lygia, in addition with their Ursus. There must be more of these confessors; and they gave help to Lygia."

"This belief commands to forgive," said Vinicius. "I met Pomponia in Acte's chamber, and she said to me: 'May God forgive thee the wrong which hast caused to Lygia

and us.' "

"Evidently their god is a kind of very good-willing curator."

"Ha I May he forgive thee, and as the sign of forgiveness, let him return the girl to thee."

" I would offer him a-heeatomb to-morrow. I don't want food nor a bath nor. sleep. I will take a dark lantern and go wandering through the city. Maybe I shall find her in disguise. I am sick!"

Petronius looked at him with a certain compassion. And really Vinicius' eyes became livid, his pupils shone with fever; his unshaven beard covered his strongly outlined jaws with a dark strip; his hair was in disorder, and he really looked sick. Iras and the golden-haired Eunice also looked at him with compassion, but he seemed not to see them. Neither he nor Petronius paid any attention to their presence, as if they were dogs moving around them.
'Fever corrodes thee," said Petronius.

"Yet it does."

'So listen to me. I do not know what a physician would prescribe for thee, but 1 know how I would act in thy place. Till the lost one is found I would seek in another one that which failed me. I saw in thy villa magnificent forms. Do not contradict me. I know what love is and know that when one is desired another cannot replace her. But in a beautiful slave one can always find even a momentary distraction."

"I do not want it!" answered Vinicius.

But Petronius who had a real weakness for him, and who wished indeed to alleviate his sufferings began to think how to do this.

"May be thine have not the charm of novelty for thee," he said after awhile, "but" (and here he began to look in turn at Iras and Eunice, and finally placing his palm on the hip of the golden haired Greek girl) said: "Look at this."

A few days ago, the younger Fonteius Capiton offered three wonderful lads from Clazomene for her, for even Skopas did not create a more beautiful body. I can not myself understand why I remained indifferent to her hitherto, the thought of Chrysothemis not having restrained me to be sure. Well, I give her to thee, take her for thyself!"

Hearing this the golden-haired Eunice grew pale in a moment, and looking with consternation at Vinicius, seemed

to await his answer with bated breath.

But he sprang up suddenly and pressing his temples with his hands began to speak quickly like a man who consumed by disease does not want to hear of anything:

"No! no! She is nothing to me. I care nothing for others. I thank thee but I do not want her, and I am going to seek the other one throughout the city. Order that a Gallian lacerna with a hood be given to me. I will go beyond the Tiber. If I could only see Ursus!"

And he went out hurriedly. Petronius, seeing that the young tribune really could not stay in one place, did not even try to stop him. But taking the negative answer of Vinicius for a temporary dislike for every woman who was not Lygia, and not wishing that his magnanimity should be slighted, turning to the slave, said:

" Eunice, thou wilt take a bath, and anoint and dress thy-

self, and then thou wilt go to Vinicius' house."

But she fell before him, and with clasped hands began to implore him not to dismiss her from the house. She would not go to Vinicius, and prefers to carry wood here to hypocaustum rather than to be the first of the servants there. She does not -wish to go! And she implores him to take pity upon her. May he order her to be flogged every day, only

not send her away.

And trembling like a leaf at the same time from fear and excitement, she stretched forth her arms' to him, while he listened to her with amazement. A slave which dares to beg to be excused from fulfilling a command: " I do not want to go and I can not"-was something so unheard of in Borne, that Petronius would not believe his ears at first. Finally he frowned. He was too refined to be cruel. His slaves, especially in the sphere of profligacy were allowed more liberty than others, under the condition that they should perform their service satisfactorily, and should honor the master's will equally to that of God's. In the case of disrespect to those two duties, he knew, however, not to spare punishments to which, according to the general custom, they were subject. And besides, be would not endure any opposition to anything which agitated his calmness, so looking for a moment at the kneeling slave, he said:

"Thou wilt call Teiresias and return with him."

Eunice rose, trembling with tears in her eyes and went away; she returned after awhile with the atrium overseer, a Cretan, by name of Teiresias.

"Take Éunice," he said to him, " and give her twenty-

five lashes, so, however, as not to spoil the skin.",

Saying this, he passed to the library and sitting down to a table of rosy marble, began to work over his <sup>11</sup> Feast of Trimalchion. "But Lygia's flight and the sickness of the little Augusta disturbed him too much, so that he could not work long. That sickness especially was an important event. It came to Petronius' mind that should Caesar believe that Lygia cast a charm over the little Augusta, then the responsibility may fall on him, too, for it was at his request that the girl was brought to the palace. He counted, however, that at the first interview with Caesar he would in some way be able to explain the whole inconsistency of such a supposition, and besides he counted a little, too, on a certain weakness felt for him by Poppaea, who, it is true, was hiding it carefully, but not so carefully that he should not divine it.

And so after awhile he shrugged his shoulders at these fears and he decided to go to the triclinium to strengthen himself and afterwards order to be borne once more to the palace, after to the Mars Field, and to Chrysothemis. But on the way to the triclinium, at the corridor-entrance designed for the servants, he suddenly perceived the slender figure of Eunice standing under the wall among other slaves, and forgetting that he gave no other command to Teiresias except that he should flog her, he frowned again and looked

around for Teiresias.

Not seeing him, however, among the servants, he turned to Eunice:

<sup>11</sup> Hast thou received the flogging?"

And she for the second time threw herself at his feet, pressed the edge of his toga to her lips and answered:

"0, yes, lord! I did I 0, yes, lord I

In her voice sounded joy and gratitude. It was evident that she supposed that the flogging was to take place, then her dismissal from the house; but now she could remain. Petronius, who understood this, was astonished by the vehement resistance of the slave; but he was too much of an expert judge of human nature—not to divine that love only might be the cause of such a resistance.

"Hast thou a lover in this house?" he asked.

And she raised her blue, tearful eyes to him and answered in so low a voice that it was hardly possible to hear her.

"Yes, lord!"

And with these eyes, with tjiat golden hair thrown back,

with the fear and hope in the face, she was so beautiful, she looked at him so imploringly that Petronius, as a philosopher, who himself was proclaiming the power of love, and as an aesthetic adored all beauty, felt for her a certain kind of compassion.

"Who of them is thy lover?" he asked, pointing with his head at the servants.

But there was no answer to this, only Eunice lowered her face to his feet and remained motionless.

Petronius looked at the slaves, among whom were beautif-ul and stately youths, but from no face he could learn anything, and instead, ali had some strange smiles; he then looked'for a moment at Eunice and then went in silence to the triclinium.

After the refreshment he ordered to earry him to the palace, and afterward to Chrysothemis, with whom he remained till late in the night. But on his return he commanded to call Tiresias to him.

"Did Eunice receive the flogging?" he asked him.

"Yes, lord. Thou hast not, however, allowed the skin to be cut."

1 ' Have I not issued another order in regard to her?"

"No, lord," he-answered, with uneasiness.

"Well who of the slaves is her lover?"

"Nobody, lord."

1 'What dost thou know of her?"

Tiresias began to speak with a somewhat uncertain voice: "Eunice never leaves the cubiculum at night, in which

"Eunice never leaves the cubiculum at night, in which she sleeps with the old Acrisiona and Iflda; after thy bath, lord, she never remains in the bathroom.... Other women slaves laugh at her and call her Diana."

"Enough," said Petronius. " My relative to whom I presented Eunice did not accept her, so she will remain at

home. Thou canst go."

"Am I permitted to speak yet of Eunice, lord?"

'11 ordered thee to say everything thou knowest."

"The whole 'familia' talks, lord, of the flight of the maiden which was to live in the house of the noble Vinicius. After thou hast left, lord, Eunice came to me and tolS me that she knows a man who will be able to find her."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Ah!" said Petronius. "What man is it?"

"I clo not know him, lord; I thought, however, that I ought to inform you of this."

"All right. May this man await to-morrow, in my house, the arrival of the tribune, whom thou wilt request to-morrow, in my<sup>T</sup> name, to visit me in the morning."

The "atriensis" bowed and withdrew.

Petronius, however, involuntarily began to think of Eunice. At first it seemed to him that the young slave-girl wishes that Vinicius should regain Lygia for the reason only that she herself should not be forced to take her place in the house. But afterward it came to his head that that manwhom Lygia recommends may be her lover, and that thought suddenly seemed disagreeable to him. There was, it is true, a simple way to find out the truth, for it sufficed to order that Eunice be called; but the hour was late, and Petronius felt himself fatigued after the long visit at Chrysothemis', and he was in haste to go to sleep. However, going to the cubiculum he remembered—he knew not why—that he had perceived wrinkles in Chrysothemis' eves. He also thought that her beauty was more famous in the whole Rome than true, and that Fonteius Capiton, who offered him three lads from Clazomene for Eunice, wished, however, to buy her too cheap.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Next morning Petronius had hardly finished dressing himself in his unctorium, when Vinicius, calledby Tiresias arrived. He knew already that no news came from the gates, and that information instead of delighting him, as a proof that, Lygia is still in the city, oppressed him more for he began to suppose that Ursus might have carried her out of the city immediately after the capture, before the slaves of Petronius began to watch at the gates. It is true that in autumn, when the days became shorter, the gates weny closed early, but they were also opened for those departing, the number of which was at times considerable. One also could get beyond the wails by other means, which for instance, the slaves who wanted to escape from the city knew well.

And though Vinicius sent out his men to all the roads

leading to the provinces, to the vigils in the smaller towns, with announcements of a pair of fugitive slaves, with an exaci description of Ursus and Lygia, and with the promise of reward for their capture. It was doubtful, however, if that pursuit can reach them, and even should it reach them, whether the local authorities will feel in the right to stop the fugitives at the private request of Vinicius not certified by the pretor. And for such an acknowledgment there was no time. On his part, Vipicius, for the whole day before, looked for Lygia, disguised as a slave, in all the lanes of the city; he was unable, however, to find the slightest trace or indication. He saw Aulus' men, but they also seemed to look for something, and this confirmed him in the belief that it was not the Auluses who intercepted her, and that they also do not know what happened to her.

So when Tiresias announced to him that there is a man who undertakes to find her, he hastened with all speed to Petronius' house, and having barely saluted him, began to

question him about that man.

"We will see him right away," said Petronius. "He is an acquaintance of Eunice, who will come this moment to arrange the folds of my toga and who will give us nearer information concerning him."\

"The one that yesterday thou wished to present to me?"

"That one thou didst reject yesterday, for which to tell the truth I am grateful to thee, for she is the best vestiplica

in the whole city."

And in fact the vestiplica entered almost before he ceased to speak, and taking the toga which lay on a chair inlaid with ivory, unfolded it to throw it over Petronius' shoulder. She had a bright face, and joy shone in her eyes. Petronius looked at her and she seemed very beautiful to him. After awhile, when having wrapped him in the toga, she began to arrange it, bending at moments to lengthen the folds, he saw that her arms have the most wonderful shade of a pale rose, and also the breast and shoulders were transparent as mother-of-pearl or alabaster.

A Eunice," he said, "has that man whom thou men-

tioned yesterday to Tiresias arrived ?"

"Yes. lord."

"What is his name?"

"Chilo Chilonides, lord."

"Who is he?"

"A physician, a sage, a fortune teller who knows how to read human fates and predict the future."

"Has he predicted the future to thee, too?"

A deep blush appeared on Eunice's face and made even her ears and neck rosy.

"Yes lord"

"What has he predicted to thee?" "That pain and hap-" piness will meet me."

11 The pain met thee yesterday from the hand of Tiresias, consequently happiness also ought to come."

"It came already, lord."

"What?"

And she whispered in a low voice; "I remained."

Petronius placed the palm of his hand on her golden

head.

11 Thou hast arranged the folds well to-day and I am satisfied with thee, Eunice." Under that touch her eyes in one moment covered with the mist of happiness and her breast

began to heave quickly.

But Petronius with Vinicius passed to the atrium where they were awaited by Chilo Chilonides, who seeing them made a low bow. A smile came on Petronius' lips at the supposition he made yesterday that that man can be Eunice's lover. The man who stood before him could be nobody's lover. In this strange figure there was something nasty and ridiculous. He was not old, in his sluttish beard and curly tuft of hair only here and there shone a gray hair. He had a hollow stomach, stooping back, so that at the first cast of the eye he seemed to be humpbacked and above that hump rose.a large head with a monkey and at the same time foxy face and a penetrating look. His yellowish complexion was checkered with pimples and the nose covered completely with them might indicate the love for the bottle. The neglected dress composed of a dark tunic, woven of goat-wool, and a mantle full of holes of a similar material proved a real or simulated poverty. At the sight of him the Terzytes of Homer came to Petronius' mind, so answering with a nod of his hand to his bow, he said:

"Be greeted, divine Terzytes! How are thy batches, which Ulysses, made thee under Troy, and what is he him-

self doing on the Elysian fields?"

"Noble lord," answered Chilo Chilonides, the wisest of the dead, Ulysses, sends through me to the wisest of the living, Petronius, greetings, and the request to cover with a new mantle my botches.'

"By Hecate Triformis!" exclaimed Petronius, the .answer is worthy of a mantle . . . ."

But the further conversation was interrupted by the

impatient Vinicius, who asked directly:

"Dost thou know exactly wbat thou art undertaking?" "When two familie" in two magnificent houses speak of nothing else, and with them the half of Rome is repeating, it is not difficult to know/' answered Chilo. The night before last one intercepted a maiden reared in the house of Aulus Plautius, by name of Lygia, or rather Callina, whom thy slaves, 0 Lord, were conducting from Caesar's palace to thy "insula," and I undertake to find her in the city; or if, which is little probable, she left the city, to show thee, noble tribune, where she escaped, and where she has hidden."

"Well," answered Vinicius, who was pleased by the accuracy of the answer, "What means hast thou for that?"

Chilo smiled slyly: "Thou possessest the means, lord.

I have only the wisdom."

Petronius also smiled, for he was entirely satisfied with his guest.

"That man can find the girl," he thought.

Meanwhile Vinicius frowned with his knit brows, and said:

"Wretch! if thou deceiveth me for gain I will order to kill thee with sticks."

"lama philosopher, lord, and a philosopher cannot be covetous for gain, especially for such which thou magnanimously offerest."

"Ah, thou art a philosopher ?" asked Petronius. "Eunice told me that thou art a physician and a fortune-teller. Whence dost thou know Eunice?"

11 She was coming to me for advice, for my fame struck

her ears."

"What advice did she want?"

' For love, lord. She wished to be cured from an unrequited love."

'1 And didst thou cure her?"

"I did more, lord, for I gave lier an amulet which secures reciprocity. In Paphos, on Cyprus, there is a temple, 0 lord, in. which is preserved a girdle of Venus. I gave her two threads of that girdle enclosed in an almond shell."

"And thou didst make her to pay thee well?"

"One can never pay enough for reciprocity, and I, who have not two fingers on my right hand, am collecting money to buy a slave-copyist. who should copy my thoughts and preserve my wisdom for the world."

"To what dost thou belong, divine sage?"

am a stoic, for I have a mantle full of holes; I am a stoic, for I bear poverty patiently, and lam a peripatetic for not owning a litter. I go on foot from one wine-merchant to another, and on the way teach those who promise to pay for the pitcher."

"But by the pitcher thou becomest a rhetoric?"

Heraclitus said. 1 'Everything flows, and canst thou deny that wine is a fluid?"

1 'And he declared that the fire is a divinity, but that

divinity is ablaze on thy nose."

1' And the divine Diogenes from Apollonia declared that air is the essence of things, and the warmer the air is the more perfect beings it creates, and from the warmest air the souls of sages are created. And since cool comes in autumn, Ergo, a real sage, ought to warm his soul with wine. For thou equally canst not deny, lord, that a pitcher of even watery wine from Capua or Telesia does not bear warmth throughout all the bones of the perishable human body."

"Chilo Chilonldes, where is thy fatherland?"

"Above the Pontus Euxine. I came from Mesembria."

" Chilo, thou art great!"

"And misjudged," melancholically added the sage.

Vinicius again became impatient. In view of the hope which was gleaming before him, he would wish that Chilo should at once start on the expedition, and the whole conversation seemed to him only a useless wasting of time, for which hewas angry at Petronius.

"When wilt thou begin the researches?" he said, address-

ing the Greek.

"I liave commenced them already," answered Chilo. "And when I am here answering to thy affable questions, I am searching too.' Only have confidence, worthy tribune, and know that should thy garter be lost, I would be able to find it on the one who picked it up on the street."

"Hast thou ever been used for similar services?" asked

Petronius.

The Greek raised his eyes toward heaven.

<sup>11</sup> One values to-day too low the virtue and wisdom that even a philosopher should not be forced to seek other means of living."

11 What are thine?"

<sup>11</sup> To know everything, and serve those with news who need it."

"And who pays for it 1"

"Oh, Iord, I must buy a copyist. Otherwise my wisdom will die together with me."

"If thou hast not hitherto collected enough money for a

whole mantle, thy merits must not be eminent."

"My modesty hinders me to expose them. But think, lord, that to-day there are not such benefactors as were before, and to whom to cover the merit with gold it was as agreeable as to swallow an oyster of Puteoli. Not the merits of mine, but the human gratitude is small. Sometimes when a valuable slave runs away, who will find him if not the only son of my father? When inscription against Poppsea will appear on the walls, who will point out the perpetrators? Who will discover at the booksellers a verse against Caesar? Who will report what is spoken in the houses of senators and knights? Who carries letters which one does not wish to confide to slaves? Who listens to news at the doors of barbers? For whom have the wine merchants and bakers no secrets? Whom do the slaves trust? Who can see through and through every house from the atrium to the garden? Who knows all the streets, lanes, lurking places? Who knows what is spoken in the termas, in the circus, in the markets, in the schools of the lanists, in the sheds of the slave-dealers, and even m'the arenarias?"

"By gods! enough! noble sage" exclaimed Petronius, "or we will drown in thy merits, virtue, wisdom and elocution. Enough! We wished to know who thoirart and we know!"

But Vinicius was glad for he thought that this man was similar to a hunting hound, when once put on the trail, will Dot cease till he finds the lurking place.

Well " he said • 'dost thou need indiestiob>?'

"I need arms."

"What kind?" asked Vinicius with astonishment.

The Greek held out his palm, and with the other made the gesture of counting money. '1 Such are the times to-day, Lord," he said with a sigh.

'1 So thou wilt be an ass, then, " said Petronius, ' ' who is

carrying a fortress with the aid of bags of gold."

"I am only a poor philosopher, lord" answered Chilo with humility.

Vinicius threw him a purse which the Greek caught in the air, though he really lacked two fingers of his right hand.

Then he lifted his head and said:

"Lord, I know more already than thou expectest. I know that it was not the Auluses who captured Lygia, for I spoke with their servants. I know that she is not in the Palatine, where all are occupied with the sickness of the little Augusta, and maybe I am conjecturing why you prefer to seek for the girl with my aid, instead of that of vigils aud Caesar's soldiers; I know that a servant from the same country she is from, facilitated her escape. He could find no aid from slaves, for the slaves who all stand together, would not help him against thy slaves. Only his co-believers could help him."

"Dost hear, Vinicius?" interrupted Petronius, "did not

I tell thee the same word by word?"

"This is an honor for me," said Chilo. "The maiden, lord, infallibly worships the same divinity that does the most virtuous of genuine Roman woman, that genuine malrona stolata. Pomponia. I also heard this, that Pomponia was tried in the house for confessing some strange divinities. I could not, however, find out from her servants, what is that divinity and how are its worshipers called. If I could know that, I would proceed to them, and become the most pious among them and gain their confidence. But thou, lord, who, I also know, hast spent a dozen or so of days in the house of the noble Aulus, canst thou not give me some information concerning it?"

"I can not," said Vinicius. "You have asked me long for various things, noble lords, and I answered to these questions, allow that I put them now. Hast thou not seen, worthy tribune, any statuettes, any offerings, any marks, any amulets on Pomponia, or on thy divine Lygia? Hast thou not seen them sketching among each other any signs, comprehensible for them alone?"

"Signs? . . . . Wait! . . . that Lygia sketched a fish on the sand." . Yes! I saw once

"A fish? Aa! Ooo! Has she done that once or several times?"

"Once."

' ' And art thou sure, lord, that she sketched ... a fish?"

"Yes, it is so!" answered Vinicius, with roused curiosity.

"Dost thou divine what that signifies?"

"If I divine! . . . ; "exclaimed Chilo, and bowing in sign of farewell, he added:

'1 May fortune scatter on you equally all gifts, august

lords!"

"Command that a mantle be given to thee!" saidPetronius to him on the way.

"Ulysses offers to thee thanks for Thersytes," answered

the Greek. And bowing again, he went out. "What wilt thou say of that noble sage?" asked Petronius of Vinicius.

"I will say that he will find Lygia!" exclaimed Vinicius with joy; "but I will also say that should a dominion of rogues exist, he could be a king in that dominion."

"Undoubtedly. I must make a nearer acquaintance with that stoic, but meanwhile I will order to fumigate the

atrium after him."

But Chilo Chilonides, wrapping himself with a new mantle, tossed under its folds the purse received from Vinicius, and rejoiced equally with its weight as with the sound. Walking slowly and looking back to see if they were not looking at him from Petronius' house, and passing the portico of Livia, he turned to Subura.

"I must go to Sporus,"he spoke to himself, "and let flow some of Fortuna's wine. I have finally found what I have sought for so long. The young one is passionate, lavish, like the mines of Cyprus, and he would be ready to give half of his fortune for that Lygian linnet. Yes, one like this I have sought for a long time. One must, however, be very careful with him, for his frowning does not predict anything good. Ah! wolf-bitches rule the world today! I would be less afraid of that Petronius. .

O gods! Does not the procuring pay better to-day than virtue? Ha! she sketched thee a fish on the sand? If I know what that signifies may I choke myself with a piece of goat-cheese! But I will know! But, since the fishes live under the water, and the searching under the water is more difficult than on land, ergo; he will pay me for that fish separately. One purse more like this, and I would be able to cast away the beggar wallets and buy a slave. . . But what wouldst thou say, Chilo, if I would advise thee to buy not a male but a female slave? . . I know thee! . I am sure thou wouldst consent! ... If she were beautiful, as, f. r instance, Eunice, thou wouldst thyself grow young bj' her, and at the same time wouldst have an honest and sure income from her. I sold that poor Eunice

should Petronius give her to me, I would accept her. . . . Yes, yes, Chilo, son of Chilonides. . . . Thou hast lost thy father and mother! . . . Thou art an orphan, so buy thee for consolation even a female slave. It is true that she must live somewhere, so Vinicius will.rent her a dwelling in which thou too wilt also take shelter. She must dress herself so, Vinicius will pay for her apparel; and she must eat, hence he will feed her. Oh, how difficult this life is! Where are the times in which for an obolus one could get so many beans with bacon as one

two threads from my own old mantle. She is foolish, but

But here is that thief Sporus! In the wine-shop it is the easiest to find out something.'-'

Thus speaking he entered the wine shop and ordered a pitcher of "dark" for himself, but seeing the distrustful glance of the inn-keeper he picked a gold coin out of the purse, and putting it on the table said:

could hold in both hands, or a piece of goat's-gut filled with blood and as long as the arm of a twelve year old lad?....

"Sporus, I have worked to-day with Seneca from dawn till noon, and this is with what my friend presented me on

the way.

The round eyes of Sporus at this sight became rounder yet, and wine was soon before Chilo, who moistening a finger in it sketched a fish on the table and said:

"Dost thiou know what that signifies?"

"A fish. Well, a fish is a fish I"

"Thou art stupid, though thou addest so much water to

the wine that a fislTmight.be found in it. This is a symbol which, in the tongue of the philosophers, means: 'The smile of the Fortune.' If thou shouldst divine it, perhaps thou too wouldst make a fortune. Honor philosophy, I tell thee, for otherwise I will change my wine-room, which my personal friend, Petronius, is persuading me to do for a long time."

## CHAPTER XIV.

During the next few days Chilo did not appear. Vinicius, from the time he had learned of Acte that Lygia loved him, was a hundred times more anxious to find her, and he commenced a search on tris own account, not at that time being able to go for assistance to Ctesar, who was worried on account of the little Augusta. And no sacrifices in the temples, prayers or votives helped her, nor did the science of phj<sup>r</sup>sicians or all the witchcraft to which they went in extremity

After a week the child died. Mourning fell on the court and on Rome. Ceesar, who at the birth of the child was going mad from joy, was going mad now from despair, and, closeting himself in his apartments, refused food for two days, a.nd although the palace swarmed with senators and Augustinians, who had hastened thither with signs of sorrow and sympathy, he would not see anybody. The senate assembled in extraordinary session, at which the dead child was proclaimed a goddess. It was decided to erect a temple for her and establish a separate priesthood therein. In other temples new sacrifices were laid in honor of the deceased child; statues of her were cast from precious metals, and the funeral was one endless solemnity, at which the people admired the excessive marks of grief which Ctesar showed. They wept with him, stretched forth their hands for gifts, and, above all, amused themselves with the uncommon spectacle.

Petronius became alarmed by that death. It was already known throughout Rome that Popptea ascribed it to enchant-

ment. The physicians, thus enabled to justify the inefficiency of their efforts, sustained the statement, as did the priests, whose offerings proved to be powerless, the charmers who were trembling for their lives, and even the people. Petronius was now glad that Lygia ran away, since lie wished no evil to Aulus, but still wished good to himself and Vinicius; therefore, when the cypress which was set before the Palatine as a sign of mourning was removed, he went to the reception prepared for the senators and Augustinians, to convince himself how far Nero lent his ear to the reports of spells, and to prevent the consequences which might arise from this.

Knowing Nero, he supposed too that, though he does not believe in charms, will feign that he believes, so as to deceive his own pain, and to avenge himself on someone, and finally to obviate the supposition that the gods are beginning to punish him for crimes. Petronius did not think that Caesar could really and deeply love even his own child, and though vehement in his love, Petronius felt certain that he exaggerated his suffering. And he was not mistaken. Nero listened to the consolations of the senators and knights with a stony face, with eyes fixed on one point, and it was evident that if he really suffered, he was at the same time thinking what impression his pain was making on those present; he posed as Niobe and gave an exhibition of parental sorrow as an actor on the stage. He could not even hold out in his silent and as if petrified grief, for at times he 'would make gestures as if pawing dust of the earth on his head, and at moments he groaned dully; but catching sight of Petronius he sprang up and cried with a tragic voice so that all those present should be enabled to hear him:

"Eheu! Thou art guilty of her death I It is at thy advice that an evil spirit entered into these walls, and with one look sucked the life out of her breast I Woe to me I And would that my eyes had not looked at the light

of Helios Woe to me! Eheu! Eheu!"

And, raising his voice more and more, he passed into a shout of despair; but Petronius in the very same moment resolved to put everything on one chance of the dice; so, stretching forth his hand lie plucked off the silk handkerchief which Nero always wore on his neck and placed it on Caesar's mouth.

"Lord," he said, solemnly, "burn Rome and the world

from pain, but preserve us thy voice!"

Those present became amazed, and so was Nero for a moment; Petronius alone was unmoved; he knew well enough what he was doing. He had in his mind that Terpnos and Diodor had a direct order to close Caesar's mouth whenever he would raise his voice and expose it to any harm.

"Caesar," he continued with the same gravity and sorrow,

we have suffered an immeasurable loss, may at least this

treasure of consolation remain to us I"

Nero's face quivered, and a moment later tears poured from his eyes. All at once he rested his hands on Petronius' shoulders, and placing his head on his bosom, began to repeat, through his sobs:

"Thou alone of all hast thought of that, Petronius; thou

alone."

Tygellinus turned yellow from envy; but Petronius spoke:

"Go to Ancium! there she came to the world; there joy flowed on thee; there also will flow alleviation. May the sea-air refresh thy divine throat; may thy breast breathe the salt dampness. We, devoted, will follow thee everywhere, and when we soothe thy pain with friendship, thou wilt soothe us with a song."

"Yes," said Nero, sorrowfully; "I will write a hymn to

her honor and compose music for it.'

" And after that thou wilt seek the warm sun in Bajae."

"And after that forgetfulness in Greece."
"In the fatherland of poetry and song!"

And the stony, gloomy state of mind passed away gradually as clouds covering the sun, and instead a conversation began, which, though full of sadness, -was also full of projects for the future, touching on journeys, artistic appearances, and even receptions required by the announced arrival of Tyrydates, king of Armenia. Tygellinus tried, it is true, to continue to mention of enchantments, but Petronius, now sure of victory, took up the challenge directly:

"Tygellinus," he said, "dost thou think that enchant-

ments can hurt gods?"

"Caesar, himself, spoke of them," - answered the courtier.

"Painspoke, not Caesar, but what dost thou think of that?

"Gods are too powerful to be subject to enchantments."

"So wouldst thou deny the divinity of Caasar and his

family?"

"Peractum est I" muttered Epryus standing close by, Marcellus repeating the shout which the people gave when a gladiator on the arena was struck at one blow so that he needed no other.

Tygellinus gnawed his anger within himself. Between him and Petronius rivalry in regard to Nero had long existed. Tygellinus had this superiority, that Nero made little ceremony, or none at all, in his presence. Hitherto, Petronius, when they met with each other, always overcame him.

And so it happened now. Tygellinus became silent and only set down in his mind those senators and knights who, the moment Petronius withdrew into the depth of the hall, surrounded him at once, thinking that after what had happened he would certainly be the first favorite of Caesar.

Petronius, after leaving the palace, went to Vinicius and

telling him of the clash with Caesar and Tygellinus, said:

"I have not only turned away the danger from A ulus, Placius and Pompania, and at the same time from us both, but even from Lygia, whom no one would seek for the reason that I persuaded that copper-bearded monkey to go to Aucium and from there to Neapolis or Bajae. And lie will go, for hitherto he did not dare to appear in Rome publicly in a theatre, and I know that long ago he has had the intention of appearing in Neapolis (Naples). After that he is dreaming of Greece, where he wishes to sing in all the more important cities, and afterwards to make a triumphal entry into Rome, together with all the wreathes which the 'Grseculi' will offer him. During that time we w'ill be able to seek for Lygia freely and to hide her safely. And now, has our noble philosopher made his appearance yet?"

"Thy noble philosopher is a swindler. No! He did not show up, and will do so no more." "And I have better opinion, if not of his honesty, at least of his sense. He has once drawn -blood from thy purse, and he will come if

only to draw it a second time."

"Let him beware that I don't draw blood from him."

"Do not do that; have patience with him till thou art fully convinced of his treachery. Do not give him any more money, but instead promise him a magnanimous reward whenever he brings thee sure information. Dost thou also undertake something on thy own account?' "Two of my freedmen, Nimfidius and Dcmas seek for her at the head of several dozens of men. The slaves who find her have their liberty promised to them. Besides, I have sent special messengers over all the roads leading to Rome to inquire at all the inns about the Lygian and the maiden. I am myself running through the city day and night, counting on some happy chance."

Whatever thou mayest discover, inform me, for I have

to go to Ancium."

"All right."

<sup>1</sup> 'And if some morning on awakening thou wilt tell thyself that it is not worth while to torment oneself for a girl, and have so much trouble because of her, then come to Ancium. There will be no lack of women nor amusement.

Vinicius began to pace up and down with quick steps, while Petronius looked at him for some time and finally<sup>7</sup> said:

"Tell me sincerely—not as a hotspur who endeavors to make himself believe something, and who excites himself, but like a reasonable man who answers a friend. Dost thou care âs much as ever for that Lygia?

Vinicius stopped for a while and looked at Petronius as if he had never seen him before, and then began to walk

"again. It was evident that he was restraining himself.

Finally from a feeling of his own helplessness, sorrow and anger from unsurmountable yearning, the tears gathered in his eyes, which spoke stronger to Petronius than the most eloquent words. So meditating for a moment he said:

"It is not Atlas who bears the world on his shoulders,

but a woman and she sometimes plays with it as with a hall."

"Yes!" said Vinicius, and they began to take farewell from each other. But at that moment a slave announced that "Chilo Chilonides is waiting in the antechamber and begs to be admitted to the presence of the lord. "Vinicius ordered the slave to let him in immediately while Petronius said:

" Ila! did I not tell thee. By Hercules! Only keep thy

calmness; otherwise he will rule thee, not thou him.'

"Greeting and honor to the noble military tribune, and to thee, lord!" said Chilo entering. " May your happiness be equal to y'our fame, and the fame may course around the whole world, from the pillars of Hercules to the frontiers of Arsacidie."

"Be greeted, law giver of virtue and wisdom!" answered Petronius. But Vinicius asked with feigned calmness:

"What dost thou bring?"

"The first time I brought thee, lord, hope; at present I bring thee certainty that the maiden will be found."

"That means that thou hast not yet found her?"

"Yes, lord, but I found out what the sign means which she made thee. I know who the people are who captured her, and I know among the worshipers of what deity we must seek her."

Vinicius started up from the chair on which he sat, but Petronius placed his hand on his shoulder, and turning to Chilo, said:

"Speak on!"

"Art thou positively sure, lord, that the maiden sketched a fish on the sand?"

"I am!" burst forth Vinicius.

Then she is a Christian, and Christians have intercepted

her." A moment of silence followed;

'Listen, Chilo," finally said Petronius. <sup>11</sup> My relative has destined for thee a considerable sum of money for finding the girl, but a no less amount of rods if thou wishesttoswindle him. In the first instance thou wilt buy not one but three copyists; in the other, the philosophy of all the seven sages with addition of thy own will not suffice thee for the healing salve."

"The maiden is a Christian!" exclaimed the Greek. •

"Bethink thyself Chilo. Thou art not a stupid man! We know that Junia Sylana together with Calvia Cryspinilla accused Pomponia Graesina of confessing the Christian superstition, but we also know that the domestic court acquitted her of that charge. Wouldst thou wish now to raise it again? Wouldst thou wish to make us believe that Pomponia and with her Lygia can belong to the enemies of mankind, to the poisoners of fountains and wells, to the worshipers of an ass's head, to people who murder children and give themselves up to the most foul profligacy? Think, ChilOj if the thesis which thou art announcing to us will not rebound on thy back."

Chilo spread out his arms in sign that it was not his fault,

and then said: "Lord, pronounce in Greek the following sentence: 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."

"Well, I am pronouncing them. What of that?"

'And now take the first letters of every one of these words and put them so that they make one word."

"Fish!" said Petronius with astonishment.

'That is why the fish became the symbol of the Christians," answered Chilo proudly.

A moment of silence followed. There was, however, something so striking in the arguments of the Greek, that both friends could not conceal their amazement.

"Vinicius," asked Petronius, "art thou not mistaken, and

did Lygia really sketch thee a fish?"

"By all the subterranean gods, one may go mad," cried the young man with excitement. "If she would sketch me a bird I would have said 'a bird."

" So she is a Christian, " repeated Chilo.

" 'That means that Pomponia and Lygia are poisoning the wells, murdering children captured on the street, and give

themselves up to profligacy."

"Nonsense! Thou, Vinicius, wert longer in their house, but I know enough of Aulus and Pomponia, and even of Lygia, to be able to say: 'Stupidity and calumny!' If the fish is the emblem of the Christians, which it is really difficult to deny, and if they are Christians, then by Proserpina, evidently the Christians are not what we take them for."

"Thou speakest like Socrates, lord," answered Chilo.
"Who has ever scrutinized a Christian? Who has learned

their teaching? When I wandered three years ago from Neopolin here to Rome (oh, why did I not remain there!), a man, a physician joined me, by the name of Glaucos, of whom it was said that he was a Christian, and in spite of that I convinced myself that he was a good and virtuous man."

"Was it not from this virtuous man thou hast now found

out what a fish signifies?"

"Alas, lord! On the way, in an inn, somebody thrust a knife into the honest old man, and-his wife and child were carried away by slave-dealers, and I, defending them, lost these two fingers. But as they say, there is no lack of miracles among the Christians, so I have hopes that they will grow out on my hand again."

"How is that? Hast thou become a Christian?"

"Since yesterday, lord! since yesterday! Sec, what a power there is in it! and in a few days I will be the most ardent of the ardent, so that they will admit me to all of their secrets, and when they admit me, I will know where the maiden is. Maj' be that then my Christianity will pay me better than my philosophy. I have also made a vow to Mercury, that if he will help me to find the maiden, I will offer him two heifers of equal years and size, and the horns of which I will order gilded."

"So thy Christianity of yesterday, and thy former phil-

osophy, allow thee to believe in Mercury?"

"I always believe in that in which I must believe, and this is mj' philosophy, which ought to please, especially Mercury. Unfortunately you know, lord, what a suspicious god he is. He does not trust to promises of even unimpeachable philosophers, and he would probably prefer to get the heifers in advance—and' meanwhile this is an enormous expense. Not everybody is Seneca, and I cannot afford to do this. However, should the noble Vinicius wish to give something on account of that sum which he promised..."

The magnanimity of Vinicius will surpass even thy expectations, but only when Lygia shall be found, that is when thou wilt show us her hiding-place. Mercury must trust thee those two heifers, though I don't wonder that he has not the inclination to do so, and in this I recognize his

intellect."

"Listen to me, worthy lords. The discover}- I made is a great one, for though I have not found the maiden hitherto, I found the way in which one must seek her. You have sent out freedmen and slaves all over the whole city and province, and did any one of them give you any indication? No! I alone gave one. And I will tell you more. Among your slaves there may be Christians of whom you know nothing, for that superstition has already spread everywhere, and those instead of helping will betray you. It is even bad that they see me here, and therefore, thou noble Petronius, command silence to Eunice, and thou, equally noble Vinicius, announce that I am selling thee a salve which assures victory in the circus to the horses smeared with it.... I alone will seek for her, and I will find the fugitives; but

trust me, and know that whatever I receive in advance will be for me only an encouragement, for I will always expect more, and will have the greater certainty that the promised

reward will not fail me. Ah, yes!

<sup>1</sup> 'As a philosopher, I despise money, though neither Seneca, nor even Muromius or Cornatus despise it, who however did not lose their fingers in someone's defense, and who can themselves write and leave their names to posterity; but besides the slave which I intend to buy and besides Mercury, to whom I promised the heifers (and you know how the cattle rose in price), the search itself involves much expense. Only listen patiently: In the last few days my feet have become sore from constant walking. I visited wine-shops to talk with people; cakers, butchers, those selling oil, and fishermen. I ran through all fhe streets and lanes; I was in the hiding places of escaped slaves; I lost nearly a hundred ases playing mora; I was in laundries, in drying-lofts, and chop-houses; I saw mule-drivers and carvers; I have seen people who cure our bladders and pull teeth; I spoke with venders of dried figs; I was in cemeteries, and do you know what for ?

'Why, to sketch the fish, look people in the eyes, and listen to what they would say to that sign. For a long time I could not preceive anything,' till once I saw an old slave near a fountain, who drew water with buckets and was weeping. Approaching then to him, I asked him for the cause of the tears. To that, when we seated ourselves on the steps of the fountain, he answered that for his whole life he collected sestertium by sestertium to buy free a beloved son, but his master, a certain Pausa, when he saw the money, took it aw'ay and kept the son in slavery. 'And so I am weeping, 'spoke the old man—'forthough I repeat, "let the will of God be done!" I cannot, poor sinner that I am, stop the tears.' Then as if touched by foreboding, moistening my fingers in the water, I sketched him a fish, and he answered: 'My hope is also in Christ.' And I asked him: 'Didst thou recognize me bj<sup>T</sup> the sign?' He said; 'So it is, and my peace be with thee.' Then I began to ply him with questions, and the honest fellow told me everything. His master, that Pausa, is himself a freedman of the great \*Pausa, and brings supplies by the Tybrus to Rome, stones which the slaves and hired men

unload from the r:ù'« and carry to buildings being erected in the night time, so as not to hamper the movement on the streets during the day. Among them many Christians are working, and his son also, but as that is a work beyond strength, that is the reason why he wished' to buy him free. But Pausa preferred to keep the money and the slave. Thus speaking he began to weep again, and I mingled my tears with his, which was easy for me to do on account of my kindness of heart and the shooting pains in my feet, which I got from excessive walking. I also began to complain'that having come from Neapolis a few days ago, know nobody of the brotherhood; I didn't know where they were assembling to pray. He was astonished that Christians of Neapolis did not give me letters to the Roman brothers, but I told him they were stolen from me on the way. Then he told me to come at night to the river, and lie would make me acquainted with the brothers, who would bring me to the house of prayer, and to the elders who rule the Christian community. Hearing this, I was so rejoiced that I gave him the sum necessary to bujr out the son, in the hope that the magnificent Vinicius would return it to me doubly."

"Chilo," interrupted Petronius, "in thy narrative lie is swimming on the surface of the froth like oil on the water. Thou hast brought important news, that I don't deny. I assert even that a great step has been taken toward the finding of Lygia, but do not cover thy news with lies. What is the name of that old man of whom thou hast learned that Christians recognize each other through the sign of a fish?"

< 'Burycius, lord. Poor, unhappy old man! He reminded me of G-laucus, the physician, whom I defended against

robbers, and he touched me chiefly by this."

'< I believe that thou hast become acquainted with him and that thou wilt be able to profit by that acquaintance, but thou hast given him no money. Thou hast given him not an as. Dost understand me? Thou hast given him nothing."

"But I have helped him to carry the buckets, and I spoke of his son with the greatest sympathy. Yes, lord, who can hide before the penetration of Petronius? Well, I did not give him money, or rather I did give him some, but only in my soul, in my mind, which ought to suffice

him ... And I gave it because I recognized such an act as indispensable and useful, for think, 0 lord, how would he win for me at once all the Christians, what access would he open to them, and what confidence would he rouse in them!

"True"—said Petronius—"and thou canst do this."

"I will soon be able to do this?"

Petronius turned to Vinicius: "Commanded that five thousand sestertia be given to him, but in soul, in mind."

But Vinicius said.

"I will give thee a lad who will bring that necessary sum, but thou tell Eurycius that the lad is thy slave and thou wilt count out the money to the old man m his presence But since thou hast brought important news, thou wilt receive the same for thyself. Come this evening for the lad

and money."

## CHAPTER XV.

Petronius to Vinicius:

" I send thee this letter from Aneium by a faithful slave, upon receipt of which, though thy hand is more accustomed to the sword and lance than the pen, I trust thou wilt answer by the same messenger without unnecessary delay. I left thee upon a good trail and full of hope. I trust therefore, that thou hast either satisfied thy sweet desires in the embrace of Lygia, or that thou wilt satisfy them before thy real winter's wind shall blow on Campania from the summits of Soracte. 0 my Vinicius 1 may the golden goddess of Cyprus be thy master, while thou be the master of that Lygian Aurora, who flees before the sun of love. And remember that marble in itself is nothing, and that it acquires its real value only when the sculptor's hand has turned it into a masterpiece. Thou be such a sculptor, carissime! To love is not enough, one has to know how to love and how to teacli love. For the plebeians and even the animals feel the pleasure, but a genuine man differs from them in this, that he changes love into a noble art, and, admiring it, recreates it in his mind, so that he satiates not only the body but also the soul. Often when I think of the vanity, uncertainty and tediousness of our life, it comes to my mind, that, perhaps, thou hast chosen the wiser course, and that not the court of Caesar, but war and love are the only two things for which it is worthy to be born and to live.

Thou hast been lucky in war, also lucky in love, and if thou art curious of what is going on at Caesar's court, I shall inform thee of it from time to time. We are staying in Aneium and are nursing our heavenly voice, cherishing a hatred against Rome, and for the winter we intend to go to Bajse, inorder to make our public appearance in Neapolis, whose inhabitants being Greeks, will be able to appreciate us better than the tribe of wolves inhabiting the shores of the Tiber. People will hurry from Bajae, Pompeja, Puteoli, Cum®, from Stabia; there shall be no lack of applause or wreaths, and this will be an encouragement for the intended

-expedition to Ach®a.

And the memory of the little Augusta? We are still lamenting her. We are singing hymns of our own composition, so wonderful that the sirens have concealed themselves in the deepest caverns of Amphitrite from envy. The dolphins themselves would listen to us, if the noise of the sea would not hinder them. Our sorrow as yet is not over, therefore we show it to people in every form taught by the sculpture, careful at the same time, that our poses are beautiful and notice whether the people appreciate them. Ah, my dear! we shall die as clowns and comedians.

All the Augustians and all the Augustian women are here, not including five hundred she-asses, in whose milk Poppsea bathes herself, and ten thousand servants. At times it is cheerful here. Cal via Crispinilla is becoming old. It is said that she implored Poppaea to be permitted to take the bath after her. Lucan slapped Nigidia on the face, suspecting that she had an intercourse with a gladiator. Sporus lost his wife to Senecio playing dice. Torquatus Silanus offered me four chestnut steeds which will undoubtedly win this year's race, for Eunice. I declined the offer. I am grateful to thee that thou didst not accept her. As to Torquatus Silanus, the poor fellow does not surmise that he is more of a shadow than a man. His fate is decided. And dost thou know what his guilt is? He is a great-grand-son of the divine Augustus. There is no help for him. Such is our world!

As thou art aware, we expected Tyrydates here. Meanwhile, Vologeses wrote an offensive letter. As he conquered Armenia, he asks that it be left to him for Tyrydates; and if not, he will hold it anyway. Pure mockery 1 Therefore we decided on war. Corbulo will receive such power as Pompeius had during the war with the pirates. There was a moment, however, when Nero hesitated. He evidently fears the glory which Corbulo may win in case of victories. They even considered whether the chief command should not be entrusted to our Aulus. Poppsea, to whom the virtue of Pomponia is evidently as'salt in the eye, opposed it.

Vatinius promised us some extraordinary combats of gladiators, which are to take place in Beneventum. Observe what cobblers aspire to in our times, notwithstanding the saying: "Nesutor supra crepidum." Vitetlius a descendant of a cobbler, and Vatinius a son of one 1 Perhaps he himself has

drawn the shoe-maker's thread! Histrio Aliturus yesterday represented Oedipus wonderfully. I asked him also, as a Jew, whether the Christians and the Jews are the same. He answered that the Jewish religion is an ancient one, while the Christians are the new sect, originated lately in Judea. In the time of Tiberius a certain man was crucified whose followers are increasing daily, and they consider him their God. It seems to me that they uo not wish to know any other gods, and especially ours. I do not understand what harm this will do them.

Tygellinus openly manifests his hostility to me. As yet he has not bested me; however, he is my superior in one thing: that he cares more for his life and is a greater scoundrel than myself, which brings him nearer to Ahenobarbus. Those two will come to an understanding sooner or later, and then my turn will come. I do not know when this will take place, but as it must occur sometime, let us not bother with setting the time. One has to amuse himself in the meantime. Life in itself would not be bad if it were not for Copperbeard. Thanks to him a man sometimes feels aversion to himself. It is in vain to consider the struggle for his favors as a kind of a circus race, as some play, as some struggle, in which victory is desired to satisfy ambition. It is true. I often explain to, myself in this manner; but still at times it seems to me that I am a Chilo and nothing better than he. When he will cease to be of any use to thee, then send him to me. I took a liking to his edifying conversation. A greeting from me to thy divine Christian maiden, or rather beg her, in my name, not to be a fish for thee. Inform .me of thy health, inform me of thy love, know how to love, teach love, and farewell!" Vinicius to Petronius:

"Lygia is still in hiding. If not for the hope that I shall find her, thou wouldst not receive any answer, for when life disgusts one, he has no desire to write. I wanted to convince myself whether Chilo was not cheating me, so on the same night that he came to secure the money for Eurycius, I wrapped myself in a military cloak and, unseen, followed him and the boy, who I sent with him. When they arrived at the place, I observed them from a distance, concealed behind a portal column, and I convinced myself that Eurycius is not an invented person. Below, by the

river, in the light of torches, a number of men were unloading stones from a large barge and were piling them up on the bank. I saw Chilo approach them and begin to converse with an aged man, who knelt down before him. Others surrounded them, uttering shouts ' of admiration. Before my eyes the servant gave the sack to Eurycius, who, taking it, began to pray with uplifted hands, and at his side knelt another man, evidently his son. Chilo said something which I could not hear, and blest those two kneeling as well as the others, making a sign of a cross in the air, which is evidently worshipped by them, for they all bent their knees. A desire possessed me to descend to them and promise three such sacks to the man who would deliver Lygia to me, but I, feared lest I might spoil Chilo's work, and after a. moment of consideration I departed.

This happened at least twelve days after thy departure. Since then he has visited me frequently. He told me him-" self that he has gained great influence among the Christians. He says that the reason he has not yet found Lygia is on. account of the countless number of Christians in Rome; therefore they all do not know each other, neither do they know all that is going on amongst them. They are alsovery cautious and taciturn; he assured me, however, that if he only reaches the elders, whom they call presbyters, he will be able to learn all the secrets from them. He had. learned to know a few of them already and questioned them, but carefully, lest he would arouse their suspicion and thus make the work more difficult. And, though it is hard to wait, and though I lack patience, I feel that he is right and I must wait.

He also learned that they have common places for prayers, frequently outside the city, in empty houses and even, in the sand pits. There they worship Christ, sing and feast. There are many such places. Chilo supposes that Lygia goes purposely to different places of worship than those frequented by Pomponia, in order that the latter, in case of an examination, could boldly swear that she does not know of her refuge. The presbyters, maybe, advised this caution to her. When Chilo will get acquainted with those places, I will go there together with him, and, if the gods will permit me too see Lygia, I swear to thee by Jupiter, that this

time she shall not escape my hands.

I think continually of those places of prayer. Chilo dees not wish me to go with him. He is afraid. But I can not sit idly at home. I shall recognize her at once even in disguise or veiled. They gather there at nights, but I shall recognize her even in the night. I would recognize her anywhere by her voice and motions. I will go myself in disguise and I shall watch everybody entering or wakling out. I think of her continually, therefore I shall recognize her. Chilo ought to come to-morrow, and we shall go. I will take weapons with me. A few of my slaves sent to the province returned without news. But now I am positive that she is here in the city, perhaps not far away. I visited many houses under the pretext of renting. She will be a hundred times better off with me, for she is now probably dwelling amid poverty. I shall spare her nothing. Thoii writest that I have chosen well, but I have chosen cares and sorrow. We shall go first to those houses, which are in the city, then beyond the gates. Hope is born anew every morning, otherwise I could not live. Thou sayest, that one should know how to love. I knew how to talk of love with Lygia, but now I only yearn. I wait only for Chilo, and it is beyond endurance for me to stay at home. Farewell I"

## CHAPTER XVI.

Chilo, however, did not appear for a long time. Vinicius did not know what to think. In vain he repeated to himself that if the researches would lead to favorable results they must be accomplished slowly. His impetuous nature revolted against the voice of reason. To do nothing, to await, to sit with folded arms, was so adverse to his nature that he could not be reconciled to it. The traversing of dark alleys in the disguise of a slave seemed to him only a deceiving of his own inactivity and he could not pacify himself to it. His experienced freedmen, whom he ordered to make independent researches, proved themselves to be a hundred times less able than Chilo Meanwhile, besides his love for Lygia, the stubbornness of a gambler desiring victory arose in him. Such characteristic had always existed" in him. From his earliest years he had accomplished what he pleased, with the

, »assion of one who does not understand the word impossible ior the necessity of surrender. Military discipline, it is true, curbed his self-will to a certain degree, but at the same time ,t engrafted in him a conviction that every command given by him to his subordinates must be fulfilled, while a long jojoum in the East, among people accustomed to a slavish > jbedience, only confirmed him in the belief that there were no limits for his "I will." At present, therefore, his pride was wounded. Besides, the resistance and flight of Lygia was something incomprehensible for him, a certain riddle which in trying to solve he exhausted every means. He felt that Acte told the truth and that Lygia was not indifferent to him. But if this were so, why did she prefer wandering and poverty to his love, to his caresses and to the life in his luxurious house? He could not answer these questions. He only had an indefinite idea that between himself and Lygia, between their ideas, and between the worth of himself and Petronius and the worth of Lygia and Pomponia Greecina, there exists some difference and some misunderstanding, deep as an abyss, which can neither be filled nor evened up. Then it seemed to him that he must lose Lygia; at this thought he lost the remnant of his judgment, which' Petronius tried to strengthen in him. There were moments in which he did not know himself whether he loved Lygia or hated her; he only understood that he must find her, and that he would prefer that the earth should swallow him rather than that he should not see and possess her. By the power of imagination, at times he saw her as distinctly as if she were standing before him; he remembered every word that he spoke to her or heard from her. He felt her near him; he felt her upon his breast, in his arms; and desire possessed him like a flame. He loved her and summoned her. And when he thought that she in turn loved him, and that she could voluntarily fulfill everything that he desired of her, a deep sorrow overcame him and a certain great tenderness flooded his heart like an immense wave. But he also had moments in which he grew pale from rage and was delighted with the thoughts of the humiliation and tortures which he would inflict upon Lygia, when he would find her—the desire not only to possess her, but to possess her as a trampled slave. At the same time he felt that if he would be given the choice, either to be

her slave or not to see herzagain, he would prefer to be her slave. There were days when he thought of scars which a whip would leave upon her rosy flesh, and at the same time a desire arose in him to kiss those marks. It also came to his mind that he would be happy if he could kill her.

The torture, weariness, uncertainty and sorrow told upon his health, and even his beauty. He became a strict and cruel master. His slaves and even his freemen approached him with trembling, and as punishments were inflicted upon them without any cause, equally cruel as groundless, they began to hate him secretly. He, feeling this and feeling his isolation, revenged himself on them all the more. He restrained himself with Chilo alone, fearing lest he should cease his researches, while the latter, noticing this, began to master him and grew more domineering in his demands. At first during each visit he assured Vinicius that the affair would be easily and quickly accomplished; now he began to invent difficulties and, though not ceasing to guarantee ultimate success, insisted that time was needed.

At last he came, after long days of expectation, with his face so gloomy that the young man grew pale at his sight and, springing up, had barely strength enough to ask him:

'1 She is not among the Christians?"

"On the contrary, master,"—answered Chilo—"but I found Glaucus, the physician, among them."

1' What art thou speaking about, and who is he?"

'Then thou hast forgotten, master, the old man, with whom I journeyed from Neapolis to Rome and in whose defense I lost these two fingers, the loss of which prevents me from holding a pen in my hand. The bandits who captured his wife and his Children, stabbed him with a knife. I left; him dying in a tavern under Minturnæ and mourned for him for a long time! Alas! I have convinced myself that he still lives, and belongs to the Christian community in Rome."

Vinicius, who could not understand what was in question, only understood that this Glaucus formed an obstacle to the finding of Lygia, so he suppressed his anger and said:

II If thou hast defended him, he should be grateful to thee

and help thee."

' Ah, worthy tribune! the gods even are not always grateful—and what of the men? Yes! he should be grate-

fnl to me. Unhappily, however, he is an old man with a weak mind, darkened by age and sorrows, for which reason lie is not only ungrateful to me, but, as I learned just now from his fellow-confessors, he accuses me, that I conspired with the robbers and that it was I who caused his misfortunes. That is the reward for my two fingers!"

"I am certain, scoundrel, that it was as he says! " said

Vinicius.

"Then thou knowest more than he does, master," answered Chilo with dignity—"for he only supposes, that it w.s. so, -which, however, would not prevent him from summoning Christians and revenging himself on me cruelly. He certainly would have done this sooner and would have found many willing Christians had he but known my name. While in the house of prayer where we met, he did not recognize me I, however, recognized him at once and, at the first impulse, I wanted to embrace him. I was prevented only by my prudence and the habit of considering every step which I have to take. Therefore, after leaving the prayer house I began to inquire about him, and those who know him told me that he is the man who was betrayed by a companion while journeying from Neapolis. For otherwise, I could not know that he relates this falsehood about me."

What does this concern me! Speak, what thou hast seen

in the house of prayer."

"It does not concern thee, master, but it does concern my life. And as I want my teaching to survive, I prefer rather to renounce the reward promised by thee, than to expose my life for the sake of empty gain, without which, a true philosopher, I will know how to live and seek the divine truth."

But Vinicius approached him with an ominous face and

began to speak with a stifled voice.

"And who told thee that death shall meet thee sooner from the hand of Glaucus than from mine? How dost tliou know, dog, whether thou wilt not be buried right away in my garden?"

Chilo, who was a coward, looked at Vinicius, and understood at a glance that one more heedless word—and he was

lost.

"I will seek for her, master, and I shall find her!" he hurriedly cried.

A silence followed, during which only the quick breathing of Vinicius and the distant song of the slaves who were working in the garden could be heard.

Now until the Greek noticed that the young patrician grew

calm, did he begin to speak.

"Death often passed by me, but I looked at it with the calmness of a Socrates. No, master! I did not say that I renounce the researches for the maiden, and I wanted only to tell thee that they are now connected with great danger to me. Some time ago thou doubted whether there was a certain Eurycius in the world, and, though thou hast convinced thyself with thy own eyes that my father's son has told the truth, thou accusest me now of inventing Glaucus. Alas! Were he only an invention, I could walk among the Christians with perfect safety, as I formerly did. For that, I would surrender the poor old slavfe woman whom I bought three days ago for my assistant during my old age and decrepitude. But Glaucus lives, master, and if he would see me once, thou wouldst not see me any more, and in that event who would find the maiden for thee?"

There he again became silent and began to wipe away his

tears, then he continued:

"But as long as Glaucus is living, how can I seek for her, when at any moment I may meet him? and if I meet-him I shall perish, and together with me will perish my researches."

< 'What art thou seeking! What advice is that? And

what dost thou want to undertake ?" asked Vinicius.

'1 Aristoteles, master, teaches us that we must sacrifice smaller for greater things, and King Priamus often said that old age is a heavy burden. The burden of age and misfortunes have oppressed Glaucus for a long time and so heavily indeed, that death would be a benefit to him. For, according to Seneca, what is death if not a liberation?"....'

" Play the fool with Petronius—not with me, and speak,-

what dost thou want?"

"' If virtue be folly, may the gods permit me to stay fool for ever. I desire, master, to set aside Glaucus, for, as long as he lives, my life as well as the researches are in a constant danger."

1 Then hire men, who will beat him to death with clubs; I

will pay them."

They will rob thee, master, and will afterwards take

advantage of the exploit. There are as many criminals in Rome, as grains of sand in the arena; thou wilt not believe, however, how dear they are, when an honest man has need of employing their knavery. No 1 worthy tribune! And what if the vigils would catch the murderers while murdering? They would undoubtedly confess who employed them and thou wouldst have trouble. But they will not point me out, because I will not tell them my name'. Thou art doing wrong, that thou dost not confide in me, for, setting aside my honesty, remember that two more things are concerned here: my own life and the reward which thou hast promised."

"How much dost thou need?"

'I need one thousand sestertias, for, master, I must find honest knaves, such ones, who, having taken earnest money, will not disappear with it without any trace. For good work—good pay! Something also would be of good use to me for the wiping away of the tears which I will shed out of pity for G-laucus. I take the gods for witnesses, how I have loved him. If I get a thousand sestertias to-day, then in two days his soul shall be in Hades, and there only—if the souls preserve memory and the gift of thought—he will know how I loved him. I shall find men yet to-day, and I will tell them that, from to-morrow's evening I shall subtract one hundred sestertias for each day of Glaucus' life. I have also a certain idea, which seems infallible to me."

Vinicius once more promised him the amount demanded. but he forbade him to speak more, of Glaucus, and instead, he asked him what other news he brought, where he was during that time, what he had seen and what had he discovered. But Chilo could not tell him much news. He was in two more houses of prayer and carefully watched all, especially the women, but he did not notice any who looked like Lygia. The Christians, however, consider him as one of their own, and from the time that he gave the money for the redemption of Eurycius' son they honor him as a man who follows the steps of '1 Chrestos." He also learned from them that one great lawgiver, a certain Paul of Tarsus, is in Rome, imprisoned on account of charges preferred by Jews and he decided to become acquainted with him. But, most of all, he was glad to know that the chief priest of the entire sect, who was a disciple of Christ, and to whom the latter intrusted the government of the Christians in the whole world, is also expected to arrive at Rome at any moment. All the Christians will desire to hear him and listen to his teaching. Certain great meetings will take place, at which he, Chilo, will be present, and what is more, as it is easy to hide in the crowd, he will take Vinicius to those meetings. Then they will surely find Lygia. Once Glaucus is-set aside, there will be no great danger. Concerning the revenge—the Christians would revenge themselves, but in general, they are quiet people.

Here Chilo began to relate with certain astonishment that he never noticed them give themselves up to dissolution, poison the wells or fountains, to be enemies of the human race, worship an ass or nourish themselves with the flesh of children. No 1 he did not see this. Certainly, he would find among them such ones, who' for money would remove Glaucus, but their religion, as far as it is known to him, does not encourage any crimes; on the contrary, it com-

mands to forgive offenses.

Vinicius remembered what Pomponia Greecina told him at Acte, and he heard the words of Chilo with joy. Although his feelings for Lygia were assuming an aspect of hatred, he felt relief, hearing that the religion, which was confessed by her and by Pomponia, was neither criminal nor foul. There arose in him, however, a certain dim understanding that it was that unknown and mysterious worship of Christ which formed the breach between himself and Lygia, therefore he began to fear that religion and hate it at the same time.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

It was important for Chilo to set aside Glaucus, who, although advanced in years, was not at all decrepit. In the story that Chilo related to Vinicius there was some truth. He knew Glaucus before, betrayed him, sold him to the robbers, deprived him of his family, of his property, and delivered him to be murdered. He recalled those events, for he deserted the dying man, not in a tavern, but in a field near Minturnæ, and did not foresee that Glaucus would recover and come to Rome. Therefore, when he saw him in the house of prayer he was scared and desired to abandon the search for Lygia. But on the other hand Vinicius seared him still more. He understood that he must choose between the fear of Glaucus and the pursuit and vengeance of a powerful patrician, to whose aid the still more powerful Petronius would come. In the presence of such circumstances Chilo ceased to hesitate. He deemed it better to have small enemies than great ones, and although his cowardly nature flinched from bloodshed, the murdering .of Glaucus was a necessity, so he would place it in the hands of the slaves.

At present the only question was the choosing of the best men for the deed, and to them he related his idea of which he had mentioned to Vinicius. Passing his nights in the wine-shops among people without homes, honor or faith, he could easily find men who would undertake any work; but still more easily such men, who finding that he had money in his possession, would begin the work and then, extort the whole amount from him by threatening to deliver him into the hands of the vigils. Besides, for some time, Chilo felt aversion for the rabble, for the foul and at the same time horrible figures, who nestled themselves in suspected houses in the Suburba or in the Trans-Tiber. Judging all people by himself and not having sufficiently fathomed the Christians nor their religion, he judged that among them he would also find willing tools, and as they seemed to him more honest than others, he decided to represent the case to them in such a way that they would undertake it not only for the money, but for the good work they were accomplishing:

For this purpose he spent the evening with Eurycius, whom he knew was devoted to him with his whole soul and would do everything to help him. But being of a cautious nature Chilo did not think of disclosing his intentions to him, which would stand in open opposition with the belief of the old man in Chilo's virtue and piety. He desired to have men willing to do anything, and to arrange the affair with them in such a way, that out of consideration for themselves they would keep it an everlasting secret.

Eurycius, after redeeming his son, rented a small stand, which were so numerous near the Circus Maximus. Here he sold olives, beans, unleavened dough, and water sweetened with honey, to the spectators coming to the races. Chilo found him at home arranging his stand, and greeting him in the name of Christ, he began to speak of the affair, which brought him there. Rendering a service to them, he thought that they would repay it with their gratitude. He needed two or three strong and courageous men to avert a danger menacing not only him but also all the Christians. He was poor, for almost all that he had he gave to Eurycius, still he would pay such men for their services, under the condition that they would trust him and fulfill faithfully all that he commanded.

Eurycius and his son Quartus listened to him as their benefactor. They both declared that they were willing to do his bidding, believing that such a holy man would not require something incompatible with the teaching of Christ.

Chilo assured them that they were right and, raising his eyes, seemed topray; in reality he was considering whether it would not be well to accept their offer, which would save him a thousand sestertias. But, after amoment of consideration, he rejected it. Eurycius was an old man, not so much weighted by, old age, but emaciated by cares and sickness. Quartus was sixteen years of age, while Chilo needed able and strong men. As to the thousand sestertias he hoped his scheme would enable him in any case to save a considerable part of it.

They insisted for some time, but when he positively

declined they submitted. Then Quartus said:

"I know the baker, Demas, master, at'whose hand-mills slaves and hired men are working. One of those hired men js so strong, that he would suffice not for two but for four men, as I saw him lifting stones which four men could not move from the spot."

"If he is a pious man and willing to sacrifice himself for his brethren, then make me acquainted with him," said

Chilo.

"He is a Christian, master," answered Quartos, "for mostly Christians are working at Dernas'. There are night and day workmen, and he belongs to the night workmen. If we go there now, we will find them at supper, and thou canst speak with him unhindered. Demas lives near the Emporium."

Chilo agreed most willingly. The Emporium lay at the foot of the Aventinian hill, hence not too far from the Great Circus. It was possible to reach it without climbing the hills, by going along the river through the Porticus

.; Emilia, which shortened the road considerably.

'11 am old, " said Chilo when they arrived under the colonade, " and sometimes I have obliterations of my memory. Yes! Our Christ was betrayed by one of his disciples! But I cannot remember the name of the traitor in the present moment "....

"Judas, master, who hanged himself," answered Quartos, wondering somewhat how was it possible to forget that

" Oh yes! Judas! I thank thee," said Chilo, and for some time they walked in silence. Arriving at the Emporium, which was already closed, they passed by and, going around the granaries, from which grain was given to the people, they turned to the left, toward the houses which were stretched along the Ostiensis way, up to the Testacius hill and the Forum Pistorium. There they halted in front of a wooden building, from the interior of which could be heard the noise of the hand-mills. Quartos entered the building, while Chilo remained outside, for be did not like to appear before a large number of people and also he was in a continuous fear that some fate might bring him in contact with Glaucus, the physician.

"I am curious to see that Hercules, who is serving as a mill workman," he said to himself, looking at t \e moon shining brightly; "if he is a scoundrel and a clever han, he will cost me something, but if he is a virtuous and stupid Christian, he will do gratis all I want."

His further meditations were interrupted by the return of Quartus, who came out of the building with another man dressed in a tunic, cut in such a way that his right arm and his right breast remained bare. Such a garb was used by workmen, as it permitted a perfect freedom of motion. Chilo, glancing at the newcomer, breathed with satisfaction, for he had not seen such ah arm or breast during his whole life.

"Here he is, master," said Quartus, "the brother, whom thou wantst to see."

"May the peace of Christ be with thee," said Chilo—" while thou, Quartus, tell to this brother whether I deserve faith and confidence, and then return in God's name, for there is no need of leaving thy aged father in loneliness."

"This is a holy man," said Quartus, "who gave his whole property in order to redeem me, then unknown to him, from slavery. May our Lord, the Saviour, prepare a heavenly reward for him."

The gigantic workman, hearing this, bent down and

kissed Chilo's hand.

"What is thy name, brother," asked the Greek.

"At the holy baptism, father, they gave me the name of Urban"

" 'Urban, brother, hast thou time to converse with me freely?"

Our work begins at midnight, but now they are prepar-

ing supper for us."

"Then there is plenty of time—we will go to the river

and there thou wilt hear my words."

They approached and sat upon a stone embankment. The silence was interrupted 'only by the distant noise of the hand-mills and the splashing of the waves flowing below. There Chilo looked into the face of the workman, which, notwithstanding a rather threatful and sad expression which was usual in the faces of barbarians living in Rome, seemed kind and sincere.

"So it is," he said in his soul. "This is a kind and stupid man, who will kill Glaucus for nothing."

Then he asked:

"Urban, dost thou love Christ?"

\*11 love him with my heart and soul, " answered the workingman,

"And thy brethren, thy sisters, those who taught thee the truth and the faith in Christ?"

"I love them also, father."

<sup>1</sup> 'Then may peace be with thee.".

"And with thee, father."

Silence followed again—only in the distance roared the mills, and the river splashed below.

Chilo, looking into the bright moonlight, began to speak of the death of Christ in a slow, suppressed voice. He spoke as if recalling to himself that death, or as if disclosing its secret to the slumbering city. There was something inspiring and at the same time solemn in his words. The workman was weeping, and when Chilo began to moan and deplore that in the moment of the Saviour's death there was nobody to defend him, not only from crucifying, but also from the insults of the soldiers and the Jews,—the gigantic fists of the barbarian began to clench from pity and from stiflled rage. Not only Christ's death moved him, but at the thought of that rabble scoffing at the Lamb nailed to the cross, his simple soul revolted within him and a wild desire of vengeance possessed him.

And Chilo suddenly asked:

"Urban, dost thou know, who was Judas?"

" I know, I know! but he has hanged himself!" cried the laborer.

And in his voice there was sorrow, that the traitor had already inflicted the punishment upon himself and that he cannot fall into his hands.

And Chilo continued:

"I But if he had not hanged himself and if one of the Christians would meet him on land or on sea, ought he not revenge the torture, the blood and the death of the Saviour?"

'Who would not revenge it, father?"

' Peace be with thee, faithful servant of the Lord. Yes! It is permitted to forgive one's own wrongs, but who has the right to forgive a wrong done to God? But as a serpent generates a serpent, as malice brings forth malice, and as treason breeds treason,—so from the virus of Judas arose another traitor, and as the other one delivered the Saviour to the Jews and the Boman soldiers, so this one, who lives amongst us, wants to deliver His sheep to the wolves, and,

if no one prevents the betrayal, if nobody crushes the head of the serpent in time—destruction is awaiting all of us, and

together with us will perish the faith of Christ.'

The laborer looked at him with uneasiness, as if not fully understanding what he heard, while the Greek, covering his head with the corner of his cloak, began to repeat in. a voice that seemed to come from beneath the earth.

"Woe to you, servants of the true God, woe to you,

Christian men and Christian women!"

And silence followed again, again was heard the roaring of the mills, the dull song of the laborers and, the noise of the river.

"Father," asked the laborer at last, "what traitor is he?"

Chilo dropped his head. '1 What traitor is he? A son of Judas, a son of his venom, who pretends to be a Christian, and goes to the houses of prayer in order to accuse the brethren before Ctesar that they do not want to recognize Caesar as god, that they poison the fountains, murder the children and want to destroy this city so that a stone should not remain upon a stone. In a few days there will be an order issued to the Pretorians to imprison the old men, women and children, and to lead them to death as the slaves of Pedanius Secundus were sent to death. And all this was done by this second Judas. But if the first one was not punished, if no one took revenge on him, if no one defended Christ in the hour of the death,—who will want to to punish this one, who shall crush the serpent before Ctesar will hear him, who shall destroy him, who shall defend the brethren and the faith in Christ from destruction?"

And Urban, who sat upon a stone till now, suddenly arose and said:

"I shall do this, father."

Chilo also arose, looked into the face of the laborer illuminated by the moonshine, then extending his arm, he slowly placed his hand upon Urban's head.

"Go among the Christians,"—he solemnly said—" go to the houses of prayer and ask the brethren for Glaucus, the physician, and when they will point him out to thee, then, in the name of Christ, kill him.

"For Glaucus?" . . . repeated the laborer, as if wishing

to fix this name in his memory.

"Dost thou know him?"

"No, Ido not. There are thousands of Christians m Rome and not all of them know each other. But to-morrow night the brethren and the sisters without a single exception, will assemble in Ostrianum, for the Great Apostle of Christ 'has arrived, and will teach there, and there the brethren will point out Glaucus to me."

'1 In Ostrianum?" asked Chilo. 'But this is outside the city gates. Brethren and all the sisters? at night? outside

the gates in Ostrianum?"

"Yes, father. That is our cemetery, between the Via Salaria and Nomentana. Is it not known to thee, that the

Great Apostle will teach there?"

"11 have not been at home for two days, therefore I did not receive his letter; where is Ostrianum? for I arrived not long ago from Corinthus, where I govern the Christian community. . . . But so it is! and if Christ inspired thee so, thou shalt go at night to the Ostrianum, my son; there thou wilt find Glaucns among the brethren and thou wilt kill him on thy return to the city, for which all thy sins will be forgiven thee. And now peace be with thee."...

"Father." . . .

"I hear thee, servant of the Lamb."

Distress was seen in the face of the laborer. Not long ago he killed a man and, perhaps, two, while the religion of Christ forbids killing. He did not, however, kill them in self-defense, for this is not permitted either 1 He did not kill them, Christ preserve him, for gain. . The bishop himself had given him brethren to help, but did not permit him to kill,—and he had killed unintentionally, for God punished him with too great a strength. . . And now he does heavy penance. . . Others sing at the handmills, while he, the unfortunate man, thinks of his sin, of the offense against God.' .... How he had prayed. How he had wept! How many times did he apologize to God! And he feels till now, that he did not do enough penance. . . Arid now again he promised to kill a traitor.

. . . . It is permitted to forgive only one's own wrongs, therefore he shall kill him even before the eyes of all the brethren and sisters, who will be in Ostrianum to-morrow. But let Glaucus be condemned first by the elders among the Brotherhood, by a bishop or by the Apostle. To kill is not a great thing, and to kill a traitor is even pleasant, as to kill

a wolf or a bear, but what if Glaucus should perish innocently? How to take upon one's conscience a new murder, a new sin and a new offense against God?

"There is no time for a trial, my son," answered Chilo, "for the traitor shall go from the Ostrianum straightway to Caesar to Anciurn, or will hide himself in a house of a certain patrician, whose servant he is; but here I will give thee a sign, which, if thou wilt show after, the killing of Glaucus, the bishop and the Great Apostle shall bless thy deed."

. Saying this he took out a small coin, after which he began to look for the knife behind his girdle, and finding it, he scratched the sign of a cross upon the sestertia and handed

it to the laborer.

<• Here is the sentence for Glaucus and a sign for thyself. When thou wilt show this to the bishop after killing Glaucus, he will forgive thee also the other killing, which thou hast perpetrated unintentionally."</p>

The laborer involuntarily extended his hand for the coin, but having the first murder fresh in his mind, he experienced

a feeling of terror.

"Father," he said in an almost imploring voice, — "dost thou take this deed upon thy conscience and didst thou thyself hear Glaucus betraying the brethren?"

Chilo understood that it was necessary to give some proofs, to mention some names, for otherwise doubt might steal into the giant's heart. And suddenly a happy thought

dawned in his head.

Listen, Urban, "he said, "l live in Corinthus, but I come from Kos, and here in Rome I teach the religion of Christ to a servant girl from my country, whose name is Eunice. - She serves as 'vestiplica,' in the house of a friend of Caesar, a certain Petronius. And in that house T heard how Glaucus undertook to betray all the Christians, and, besides this, he promised to another sycophant of Caesar named Vinicius, that he shall find a maiden among the Christians for him.".

There he stopped and looked with astonishment at the laborer, whose eyes suddenly gleamed, like the eyes of a beast, while his face assumed an expression of anger and menace.

"What is the matter with thee?" asked Chilo with fear.

"Nothing, father. To-morrow I will kill Glaucus!" . . .

The Greek was silent; after a moment, taking the laborer by the arms, he turned him so that the light of the moon should fall directly upon his face and began to observe him carefully. It was evident that he hesitated in his soul whether to ask him further and bring to light everything, or, for the time, to content himself with what he had learned or guessed.

At last, however, his inborn cautiousness prevailed. He breathed deeply, after which, placing his hand again upon

the laborer's head, he asked in a solemn, clear voice:

"At the holy baptism they gave the name of Urban to thee?"

"Yes, father."

"Then peace be with thee, Urban!"

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Petronius to ViNiciirs:

"It is ill with thee, dear friend. Evidently Venus has disturbed thy senses, deprived thee of thy reason, memory and the gift of thinking of anything save love. Read what thou hast answered tv my letter, and thou wilt see how indifferent thy mind has become to everything but Lygia; how it is occupied with her alone; how it continually turns to her, and soars over her, like a hawk over his espied prey. By Pollux! find her soon; otherwise, thou wilt be turned into ashes by the flame within thee or changed into an Egyptian or Sphinx, who, falling in love with the pale Isis, as the story goes, became deaf and indifferent to everything and waited only for the night, to gaze upon his sweetheart with stony eyes.

At night go through the city disguised and frequent the Christian houses of prayer with thy philosopher. All that awakens hope and kills time is worthy of praise. But, for the sake of my friendship, do one thing: Ursus, the slave of Lygia, is supposed to be a man of unusual strength; hire Croton and undertake the excursions together. This will be safer and wiser. As Pomponia Grsecina and Lygia belong to the Christians they are probably not such scoundrels as generally considered; they gave proof, however, in the

carrying off of Lygia, that, when some sheep from the flock is concerned, they do not trifle. When thou wilt see Lygia, I know that thou wilt be unable to restrain thyself and wilt try to carry her away, and how wilt thou be able to accomplish this with Chilo alone? But Croton will know how to help himself, were she defended even by ten Lygians like TJrsus. Do not allow thyself to be cheated by Chilo, but do not spare money on Croton. Of all advices that I can send to thee—this one is the best.

Here they already cease to speak of the little Augusta and also of witcheries. Popptea mentions her at times, but the mind of Csesar is occupied with something else; besides, if it is true that the "diva Augusta" is in a changed state again, the memory of that child will soon be forgotten. For a number of days we have been in Neapolis, or rather in Bajas. Wert thou capable of thought, echoes of our sojourn here must have met thy ears, for the entire Rome talks of nothing else. So we came directly to Bajae, where we were attacked by the remembrances of the mother and reproaches of conscience. But dost thou know to what state of mind

Ahenobarbus has arrived already?

**To** this, that the murder of his mother is for him a theme for verses and a provocation for playing tragico-clownish scenes. Formerly he felt the real reproaches only from the standpoint of a coward. Now, when he has convinced himself that the world is under his feet, and no god can take revenge on him, he feigns only in order to move people with his fate. At times he springs up at nights asserting that the furies are pursuing him, rouses us, looks behind himself, assumes the posture of a comedian, playing, the part of Orestes, (and this of a poor comedian, too) declaims Grecian verses and watches whetherwe are admiring him. And we, manifestly, admire ! and instead of telling him, Go to sleep, clown! we tune ourselves to the tone of the tragedy and defend the great artist from the furies. By Castor! at least this must have reached thee, that he appeared in public at Neapolis. All the Grecian tramps from Neapolis and the neighboring cities were driven in, who filled the arena with such disagreeable exhalations of garlic and perspiration that I thanked the gods, instead of sitting in the first rows among the Augustians, I was behind the scene with Ahenobarbus. And wilt thou believe that he

was afraid? He was really afraid 1 He took my hand and placed it to his heart, which indeed beat with a quickened pulse. His breath was short, and in the moment when he had to appear, he became pale as parchment and his forehead was covered with drops of sweat. And yet he knew that in every row sat pretorians, armed with clubs, with which, in case of need, they had to stir up the enthusiasm. But there was no need. No flock of monkeys from the surroundings of Carthage can howl as that rabble did. I tell thee,—the odor of garlic even came to the stage—and Nero bowed, pressed his hands to his heart, sent kisses from his lips and wept. Then he rushed among us who were waiting behind the scene, as if intoxicated, shouting: "What are all the triumphs compared with this one? " And the rabble continued to howl and applaud, knowing that they would applaud for themselves favor, gifts, feasts, lottery-tickets and a new spectacle of the Csesar-clown. I do not wonder that they applaud, for the like of this was never seen before. He was repeating every moment: "Behold what the Greeks are! Behold what the Greeks are!" And it seems to me that from that moment his hatred against Rome increased. As a matter of fact, however, special messengers were sent to Rome with the ^announcement of the triumph and we expect thanks from the senate at any moment. Immediately after the first appearance of Nero an odd event took place The theater suddenly collapsed, but after the people had gone. I was in the theater at the time and did not see a single corpse taken out from under the ruins. Many of the Greeks look upon this as the anger of gods at the disgracement of the imperial power, but he, on the contrary, maintains that this is a favor of the gods, for his song and those who listened to it. Hence thanks. and sacrifices were offered up at all the temples, while he has new encouragement for the journey to Achsea. A few days ago he told me he • had doubts as to what the Roman people will say, and whether they might not revolt out of love for him, and fear that the distribution of grain and the spectacles might cease during his absence.

We go, however, to Beneventum to see the cobblers' splendors, which Vatinius will show, and from there to Greece under the protection of the divine brothers of Helene. As to myself, I noticed that when one is among fools, he

becomes a fool himself and finds a certain charm in his folly. Greece and the journey in a thousand ships, like some triumphal procession of Bacchus, among nymphs and bacchantes crowned with the green myrtle, with the vine-leaves, and with ivy chariots drawn by tigers flowers, thyrses wreaths, shouts evoe, music, poetry, and all Hellas applauding, is all well; but here we nourish plans more bold. We desire to create some oriental fabulous empire, a government of palms, sun, poetry-and reality changed to a dream and life to delight only. We want to forget Rome and to fix: the scale of the world somewhere between Greece. Asia and Egypt; to live the life of gods, not of men; not to know what commonness is; to wander in golden galleys under the shade of purple sails on the Archipelagus, to be Apollo, Oziris and Baal in a single person; to be rosy with the morning dawn, to be golden with the sun, to be silver with the moon; to rule, to sing, to dream .... And wilt thou believe that I, who have yet sestertias' worth of good sense and ases' worth of judgment, permit myself to be enraptured by these fantasies, because, even though they are impossible, at least they are great and unusual .... Such a fabulous empire would in future centuries assume the aspect of a dream. As far as Venus does not assume the form of Lygia or even of such a slave as Eunice, and as far as art does not ornament it; life itself is empty and often has the face of a monkey. But Ahenobarbus'will not realize his plans, were it only for this reason, that in this fabulous kingdom of poetry and orient there should be no place for treasons, meanness and death, while in him, under the guise of a poet, sits a poor comedian, stupid driver and a shallow tyrant. In fact we are strange people, when disturbed in any way. Poor Torquatus Silanus is a shade already. He opened his veins a few days ago. Lecanius and Licinius accept the consulate with fear, while the old Thraseas will not escape death, for he dares to be honest. Tygellinus is not yet able to obtain an order for me to open my veins. I am needed yet, not only as the "elegantite arbiter," but as a man without whose advice and taste the excursion to Achsea might fail. However, I think that it must end with this, and dost thou know what is my chief anxiety? That Ahenobarbus should not get that Myrrlienian goblet, which thou knowest and admirest. If, at the moment of my death,

thou wilt be at my side, I will give it to thee; if thou wilt be far awaj', then I will break it. But meanwhile we have before us the cobbler's Beneventum, Olympian Greece and Bate, which points out to everybody the unknown and unforeseen road. Be well and employ Croton, otherwise they will snatch Lygia from thee for the second time. Send Chilo to me, when he ceases to be useful to thee. Perhaps I shall make another Vatinius out of him and, perhaps, consuls and senators will tremble before him, as they tremble before that other "knight of the cobbler's thread." It would be worth while to live to see such a spectacle. When thou wilt recover Lygia, let me know, that I shall offer for you a pair of swans and a pair of doves in the round temple of Venus. Some time ago I saw Lygia in a dream, setting on thj' knees, seeking thy kisses. Take care that this should be a prophetic dream. May there be no clouds upon the thy sky, and if there are any, may they have the color and the scent of a rose. Be hearty—and farewell I"

# CHAPTER XIX...

Vinicius had hardly finished reading when Chilo, unannounced, crept into the library, for the servants had orders to admit him at any hour of the day or night.

\* 'May the divine mother of thy magnanimous ancestor, 2Eneas, be as favorable to thee, master, as the divine son of

Maia was to me."

"What does this mean?" asked Vinicius, springing from the table at which he was seated.

But Chilo raised his head and cried:

"Eureka!"

The young physician was so moved, that for a long time he could not utter a word.

"Didst thou see her?" he asked at last.

"I saw Ursus, master, and I spoke with him."

'I And dost thou know where they conceal themselves?"

"No, master. Another, through his self-love alone, would have let the Lygian know that he surmised who he was. Another would try to learn from him where he lived

and would either have received a blow from his fist, after which all the earthly affairs would become indifferent to him, or he would rouse the distrust of the giant and cause them to look for another hiding place for the maiden. I did not do this, master.' It is enough for me to know that Ursus works at a miller's near the Emporium, who is called Demas, the same as thy freedman; that now any trusty slave of thine may follow him in the morning and discover their hiding place. I am certain, master, that if Ursus is here, then the divine Lygia is also in Rome, and moreover, that it is almost certain she will be in Ostrianum to-night"....

"In Ostrianum? Where is that?" interrupted Vinicius, evidently wishing to hasten immediately to the indicated

place.

"An old hypogeum between the Via Salaria and Nomentana.' That 'pontifex maximus' of the Christians, of whom I spoke to thee, and who was expected later, has already arrived, and to-night he will teach and baptize in that cemetery. They conceal themselves and their religion, for although as yet there are no edicts which prohibit it, still the people hate them, therefore they are cautious. Ursus himself informed me that all, to the last soul, will assemble to-day in Ostrianum, for everybody wants to see and to hear the first disciple of Christ, and whom they call Envoy. And as the women hear the teachings as well as the men, Pomponia perhaps will be the only one absent of the women, for she could not account for her absence to Aulus, a worshipper of the ancient gods. Lygia, however, being under the protection of Ursus and the elders of the community, will undoubtedly come with the other women.

Vinicius, who had lived till now in a state of fever, supported by hope alone, now that his hope seemed to be fulfilled, felt a sudden weakness, such as a man feels at the end of a long journey. Chilo noticed this and resolved to

profit by it.

"The gates are watched by the men, master, and the Christians must be aware of this. But they do not need the gates. The Tiber has no gates, and though it is far from the river to the roads, still for them it is worth while to see the 'Great Apostle.' Besides they may have thousands of ways of getting over the walls. In Ostrianum,

master, tliou wilt find Lygia, and if she is not there, Ursus will be there, for he has promised to murder Glaucus. He told me that he will be there and murder him. Dost thou hear, noble tribune? Thou wilt either follow Ursus to where Lygia lives, or thou wilt command thy men to sieze lii tn as a murderer, and, having him in thy hand, thou wilt extort a confession from him as to where he had hidden Lygia. I have done my part! Another, oh master, would tell thee that he drank ten cantars of the best wine with Ursus before he extorted the secret from him: another would tell thee that he had lost a thousand sestertias playing 1 scriptæ duodecim, ' or that he bought the news for two thousand.... I knew that thou wouldst return this to me doubly, but, in spite of this, for once in my life—that is,—I meant to say, as always in my life, I will be honest, for no doubt as the magnanimous Petronius said, thy liberality will exceed all my expenses and hopes."

But Vinicius, who was a soldier gifted with a keen per-

ception, mastered his momentary weakness and said:

"Thou shalt not be disappointed at my liberality; first, however, thou wilt go with me to Ostrianum."

"I, to Ostrianum?" asked Chilo, who had not the

slightest wish to go there.

'I, noble tribune, have promised to show Lygia to thee, but I did not promise to cany her off.... Think, master, what would happen to me, if that bear of a Lygian, having torn Glaucus to pieces, would convince himself at the same time that he had unjustly slain him? Would he not consider me as the author of the accomplished murder? Remember, master, that the greater philosopher a man is, the more difficult it is for him to answer the foolish questions of simpletons. What could I answer if he asked me, Why did I accuse Glaucus, the physician? If, however, thou accusest me of deceiving thee, then I tell thee: pay me when I will show thee the house in which Lygia lives, while to-day give to me a part of thy bountifulness, in order that in the 'event of thyself, master, succumbing to some accident, may all the gods prevent it, I should not be without some reward. Thy heart could never stand this."

Vinicius went to a chest standing upon a marble pedestal, called "area," and taking a purse from it, he threw it

to Chilo.

"Those are scrupula," he saicl, " and when Lygia will be in my house, thou wilt receive a like purse filled with aiirei."

"Jupiter!" exclaimed Chilo.

But Viniciùs frowned.

"Here wilt thou receive food, after which thou canst rest. Thou, wilt not move from here before evening, and when night arrives, thou wilt accompany me to the Ostfianum."

Fear and hesitation were evident upon the face of the

Greek, after which, however, he grew quiet and said:

"Who could resist thee, master! Accept these words for a good omen, as our great hero received similar words in Ammon's temple. Concerning myself, these 'scruples' (here he shook the purse) over weigh my services, not to say anything of thy company, which is a happiness and delight to me."...

But Vinicius interrupted him impatiently and began to inquire about details' of his conversation with Ursus. It was evident that either the concealment will be discovered on that night, or she can be carried away on her return from Ostrianum. At this thought great joy seized Vinicius. Now, when he had almost the certainty of recovering her, his anger against her as well as the resentment which he had for her vanished. In his joy he forgave all her faults. He thought of her as one dear to him and felt as if she were returning after a long journey. A desire to call his slaves and order them to dress his house- with garlands overcame him. At that moment he had no resentment even against Ursus. He was willing to forgive everything to everybody. Chilo, for whom he had felt an aversion in spite of his services, now for the first time seemed an amusing and uncommon man to him. Joy filled his house, his eyes and face beamed with happiness. He began to feel the youth and delight of life anew. His former gloomy suffering was not as great as his love for Lygia. This he understood only when he expected to have her. The desire for her was arousing in him, as the earth awakens in the spring, warmed up by the sun, but his present desires were less blind and wild, and more joyful and sentimental. He also felt in himself a boundless energy and he was convinced that when he shall see Lygia, then neither all the Christians of

the world, nor even Csesar himself shall take her away from him.

Chilo, however, emboldened by the happiness of Vinicius, began to offer advice. He thought the affair should not yet be considered as won and the greatest caution be preserved, less the desired result be defeated. He also entreated Vinicius not to carry Lygia away from Ostrianum. They should go there with hoods on their heads, with covered faces, and be satisfied with observing everything from some dark corner. When they see Lygia, it would be best to follow her and notice what house she enters, and on the following morning, surround it with a force of slaves and take her in daylight. As she is a hostage and belongs to Caesar, this can be done without any fear of the law. In case that they should not find her in Ostrianum, they will follow Ursus, and the result will be the same. It would not be advisable to go to the cemetery with a great number of men, for it might attract attention, then the Christians need only to put out all the lights, as they had done at the first kidnapping, and to dispense or hide in places known only to them. They should be armed, or better still, take two trusty strong men, in order to have a defense in case of need.

Vinicius saw the logic of Chilo's reasoning and, remembering Petronius' advice, issued an order to the slaves to bring Croton to him. Chilo, who knew all in Rome, trembled upon hearing the name of this well-known athlete, whose superhuman strength he had admired upon the arena, and declared that he would go to Ostrianum. The purse filled with large aurei seemed to him much easier to win with the help of Croton.

So he sat down at the table, to which he was invited by the overseer of the atrium, and during the meal he narrated to the slaves that he supplied their master with a wonderful ointment with which it is sufficient to rub the hoofs of the poorest horses and they would leave all the others far behind. A certain Christian taught him how to prepare that salve, for the Christian elders understand witchcraft and miracles far better, than even the Thessalians, though Thessaly is famous for its witches. The Christians have an immense confidence in him, the reason of which every one who knows what a drawn fish means, will easily guess.

Speaking thus he looked carefully into the faces of the slaves in the hope of discovering a Christian among them and betraying him to Vinicius. However, when this hope failed he ate and drank plentifully, not sparing praises to the cook and promising to buy him from Vinicius. His joy was troubled only by the thought that he would have to go at night to Ostrianum. He consoled himself, however, as he would go disguised, in darkness and accompanied by two men, one an athlete and an idol of Rome; the other, a patrician and high military officer. Even if they would discover Vinicius, he thought to himself, '1 they will not dare raise their hand against him, and as to myself, they will be wise if they see even the tip of my nose."

Then he began to remember the conversation with the laborer and this remembrance filled him with new courage. He did not have the least doubt that the laborer was Ursus. He knew of the strength of Ursus from the narratives of Vinicius and from those who brought Lygia from the palace of Caesar. And, as he inquired of Eurycius about exceptionally strong men, he was astonished, that they pointed out-Ursus. Then the confusion and excitement of the laborer at the mentioning of Vinicius and Lygia left no doubt that they especially interested him. The laborer also mentioned the penace for killing a man,—and Ursus killed Atacynus; finally he perfectly answered the description of Ursus given by Vinicius. Only the changed name could occasion doubt, but Chilo knew that the Christians often accept new names

at baptism.

"If Ursus shall kill Glaucus," said Chilo to himself, 1 ' then it will- be better yet,—if he will not kill him it will also be a good omen, for it will show how difficult it is for the Christians to murder. I described Glaucus, as the real son of Judas and a traitor to all Christians; I was so eloquent that a stone would be moved and would promise to fall upon Glaucus' head, and still, I barely brought that Lygian bear to a promise that he would put his paw on him.... He hesitated, was unwilling, told me of his sorrow and penance. Evidently this is not possible among them.... Wrongs done to one's self must be forgiven, while it is not permitted to revenge wrongs done to others,—therefore,—consider, Chilo, what can menace thee? Glaucus is not allowed to take revenge on thee;... if Ursus will not kill Glaucus

for the betrayal of all Christians, Glaucus will not kill thee for such a small guilt as the betrayal of one Christian. Moreover, when I will show the nest of that turtle-dove to this lecherous ring-pigeon, I wash my hands of everything and go back to Neapolis. The Christians speak of washing of hands,—it must be a way by which if one has any dealings with them, it is finished definitely. They are good people, and wrongfully spoken of ! O gods I Such is the justice in this world. I like this religion, because it does not permit one to kill. But, if it does not permit to kill, probably, it does not permit to steal, or to cheat, or to give false testimony, and therefore I cannot say, that it is easy. It evidently teaches not only how to die honestly, as the stoics teach, but also how to live honestly. If I ever become rich and have such a house as this one with many slaves, then, I will become a Christian as long as it will be convenient to me. For a rich man can afford everything, even virtue.. . .Yes! This is a religion for the rich people, and therefore, I do not understand, how there are so many poor ones amongst them. What good will it do to them and why do they allow virtue to tie their hands? I must consider this some day. Meanwhile, glory to thee, Hermes, that thou hast helped me to find that Cadger.... But if thou hast done this for the sake of two heifers, white yearlings, with gilded horns, then I do not recognize thee. Shame on thee, thou slayer of Argos! Such a clever god who does not foresee that he will receive nothing!' I offer thee my gratitude, and if thou wouldst rather have two brutes than my gratitude, then thou art a third one thyself and at best thou shouldst be a shepherd, not a god. Also take care, that I, as a philosopher, should not prove to the people that thou dost not exist, for then all would cease to present thee with offerings. It is better to be on good terms with the philosophers."

Conversing thus with himself and with Hermes, he stretched himself upon a couch, putting his cloak under his head, and, when the slaves removed the dishes he fell asleep. He awoke, or rather he was awakened when Croton arrived. Then he went to the atrium and he began to examine the powerful form of the "lanista," ex-gladiator, which seemed to fill the entire atrium with its immensity. Croton agreed as to the price of the excursion and was speaking to Vinicius:

' By Hercules! it is well, master, that thou hast called on me to-day, for to-morrow I go to Beneventum, whither the noble Vatinius summoned me in order that I should wrestle in the presence of Caesar with a certain Syfax, the strongest negro that Africa ever produced. Dost thou imagine, master, how his back-bone will crack in my arms! but besides I will shatter his black jaw with my fist."

"By Pollux!" answered Vinicius, " I am certain, that

thou wilt do this, Croton."

"And thou wilt do excellently," added Chilo. "Yes!... Besides, shatter his jaw! This is a good idea and a deed worthy of thyself. I am willing to wager that thou wilt shatter his jaw. Meanwhile, however, smear thy limbs with olive oil, my Hercules, and girdle thyself, for know that thou mayst meet a real Cacus. The man who guards over this maiden for whom the noble Vinicius cared so much, is said to possess extraordinary strength."

But>he was telling this only for the rousing of Croton's

ambition, while Vinicius said:

"So it is,—I did not see him, but heard that catching a bull by the horns, he can drag him wherever he pleases."

"Oh!" exclaimed Chilo, who did not imagine Ursus was

so strong.

But Croton laughed scornfully.
"I undertake, noble master," he said, "to carry off with this hand whomever thou wilt order,—and with this other one to defend thee against seven such Lygians, and to bring the maiden to thy house, even if all the Christians of Rome would pursue me, like Calabrian wolves. If I shall not accomplish this, I will allow myself to be flogged in this impluvium."

"Do not permit this, master I" cried Chilo. "They will pelt us with stones, and then what good will his strength be? Is it not better to take the maiden from the house, not. ex-

posing one's self or her to peril?"

"So it shall be, Croton," said Vinicius.

11 Thy money, thy will! Remember master, that to-mor-

row I go to Beneventum."

"I have five hundred slaves in the city," answered Vinicius. < Then he gave them a sign to go away, while he himself went to the library and, sitting down, wrote the following words to Petronius:

"Chilo found Lygia. To-night I go with him and Croton to Ostrianum and I will either carry her away immediately or from her house to-morrow. May the gods pour down on thee every prosperity. Be healthy, carissime; for happiness,

does not permit me to write any longer."

And placing aside the reed, he began to walk impatiently,, for, besides the joy, which flooded his soul, he was tormented by fever. He was telling to himself, that on the following day Lygia should be in this house. He did not know, however, how to act with her, but he felt, that if she be willing to love him, he would be her servant. He remembered the assurances of Acte that he was loved, and was moved. Then it will be only a question of overpowering certain maiden shame and certain ceremonies, which the Christian religion evidently orders? But if so,—when once in his house and when she yields to persuasion or superior force, then she must tell herself: "It is done I" and after this she, will be submissive and loving.

But the entrance of Chilo interrupted the course of his

happy thoughts.

"Master," said the Greek, "this came to my mind; if the Christians have some signs, some 'tessera,' without which nobody will be admitted to the Ostrianum, what can we do?' I know it is thus in the house of prayer, and that T received such a tessera from Eurycius; allow me then to go to him to inquire accurately and to provide myself with these signs, if they prove necessary."

"Well, noble sage," answered Vinicius merrily, "thou, speakest like a cautious man and praise is due thee for this. Thou shalt go to Eurycius, or wherever thou pleasest, but, for security's sake, thou wilt leave on this table the purse;

that thou hast received;"

Chilo, who always parted with money unwillingly, frowned,—however, he obeyed the command and went out. From Carinee to Circus, near which the shop of Eurycius: was, was not very Var, therefore he returned before the evening.

"' Here are the signs, master. Without them they would not admit us. I also inquired all about the road and have also told Eurycius that I need the signs for my friends only, while I myself will not go, for it is too far for an old man like me, and besides, I shall see the Great Apostle to-mortow wild will repeat to me the most beautiful parts of his sermon."

"How: that wilt not be? Thou must go!" said Vinicius.

"I know that I must, but I shall go well hooded and I advise you to do the same, otherwise we shall scare the birds."

And soon they began to prepare, for it was becoming dark outside. They took hooded Gallic cloaks and lanterns; Vinicius, moreover, armed himself and his companions with short, curved knives, while Chilo put on a wig with which he provided himself on the way from Eurycius and they went out, hurrying in order to reach the distant Nomentanian Gate before its closing.

## CHAPTER XX.

They walked through the Vicus Patricius, along the Viminal to the former Viminal gate, near the plain on which Diocletian afterwards erected magnificent baths. They passed the ruins of the wall of Servius Tullius and, through emptier places, they arrived at the Nomentanian road, where, turning to the left toward Salaria they found themselves among hills full of sandpits, with cemeteries here and there. Meanwhile it grew completely dark, and as the moon had not yet risen, it would have been difficult for them to find the road, if as Chilo foresaw, the Christians themselves did not show the way. In fact, to the right, to the left and in front of them were seen dark figures moving carefully on "toward the sandy holes. Some carried lanterns, covering themselves as much as possible, with their cloaks, while others knowing the road better, advanced in the darkness. The trained military eye of Vinicius distinguished youngmen from the old ones aided by canes, and women wrapped -carefully into long cloaks. The few passers-by and the villagers leaving the city evidently considered those nightwanderers as laborers going to the arenaria, or as a funeral brotherhood whose members performed the rituals of their order at night. In proportion as the young patrician and his companions advanced more lanterns were gleaming around them and the numbers of persons increased. Some of them

were singing in suppressed voices, which to Vinicius seemed as if full of yearning. At moments his ear caught interrupted words or parts of song, as for instance, "Rise, who sleepest," or, '1 Rise from the deadat times again the name of Christ was repeated in the mouths of men and women.

But Vinicius paid but little attention to words, for he thought that perhaps one of these dark figures was Lygia. Some of them passing near, said, "Peace be with you!" or. "Glory to Christ!" while he was seized by uneasiness and his heart began to beat livelier, for it seemed to him that he heard the voice of Lygia. Similar forms or similar motions were deceiving him in the darkness and, perceiving

his mistake, he began to distrust his eyes.

The road, however, seemed long to him. He knew the surroundings well, but in the darkness he was not able to distinguish the places. Every moment there were some narrow passages, or parts of walls, or buildings which he did not remember were near the city. At last the edge of the moon showed itself from behind aggregated clouds and illuminated, the place better than the dim lanterns. Something finally began to glitter in the distance, like a fire or the flame of torches. Vinicius inclined to Chilo and asked whether this was Ostrianum.

Chilo, upon whom the night, the distance from the city and those figures looking like spectres evidently made a strong impression, answered with a rather uncertain voice:

I do not know, master, I never was in Ostrianum. But

they could praise Christ somewhere nearer the city."

After awhile, feeling the heed of conversation and

strengthening his courage, he added:

"They assemble like murderers, and still they are not allowed to murder, unless that Lygian deceived me shamefully."

But Vinicius, who thought of Lygia, was also astonished at this carefulness and mystery with which her fellow-confessors were assembling inorder to listen to their high-priest; therefore he said:

11 Like all religions, this one has its followers among us, but the Christians are a J ewish sect. Why do they gather here, when in the Trans-Tiber there are Jewish temples, in.

which the Jew's bring offerings in daylight?"

"No, master. The Jews are their most obstinate enemies.

I was told that before the present Caesar the Jews and Christians almost came to war. These disturbances bothered Caesar Claudius so much that he expelled all the Jews; to-day, however, that edict is abolished. But the Christians conceal themselves from the Jews and from the people, who, as is known to thee, accuse them of crimes and hate them.

For some time they walked in silence, after which Chilo, whose- fear increased in the proportion of the increasing dis-

tance from the gates, said:

11 Returning from Eurycius I borrowed a wig from a barber and I put two beans into my nostrils. They should not recognize me. But even if they do they will not kill. They are not a bad people 1 They are even very honostand I love •and esteem them."

<sup>1</sup> Do not win them to thee -with praises before the time, "answered Vicinius.

They now entered a narrow passage, closed on the sides as if with two ramparts, above which in one place the aqueduct was crossing. Meanwhile the moon emerged from behind the clouds and at the end of the passage they perceived a wall abundantly covered with ivy, gleaming silver like in the moonlight. That was Ostrianum.

Vinicius' heart began to beat livelier.

Two fossors were taking in the signs at the gate. After a while Vinicius and his companions found themselves in a rather roomy place, surrounded with a wall on all sides. Here and there stood separate monuments, while in the center of the hypogeum proper was seen a crypt, in the lower part of which the graves were, being under the surface of the grourid; a fountain was playing. It was evident, however, 'that too great a number of persons would not be able to find room in the hypogeum alone. Vinicius easily guessed the ceremony would be held under the bare sky in the yard, -in which a large crowd assembled. As far as the eye could see lanterns were gleaming and many brought no light. With the exception of a few, all, from fear of traitors or may be cold, remained hooded and the young patrician thought if they remain so till the end he would be unable to recognize Lygia in the throng.

But suddenly a pile of pitch torches were lit near the crypt. It became lighter. The crowd commenced to sing a strange hymn, at first in a low voice, then louder and louder;

Vinicius never heard a similar song before. The same yearning which struck him in the songs hummed in an undertone by the Christians on the way to the cemetery sounded again in this hymn, but much more distinct and powerful, and finally became so penetrating and weird that together with the people, the entire cemetery, hills, pits and neighborhood seem to yearn. It might seem also that there was in this some mighty calling, some humble prayer for help in wandering and darkness. Heads raised upwards seemed tosee somebody in the sky, and, the hands to invoke him to descend when the song ceased; a minute of expectation followed, so penetrating that Vinicius and his companions looked toward the stars involuntarily, as if in fear that something unusual would take place and that somebody would descend. Vinicius in Asia Minor, in Egypt and in Rome itself had seen many various temples, learned to know many religions and heard many songs, but here he saw for the first, time men, invoking the deity not because they wished to fulfill some fixed ritual, but from their heart, from such a genuine yearning for him as children might have for their father or mother. One had to be blind in order not to notice that these men not only worshipped their God, but loved him from all their soul, and this Vinicius had seen in no country, in no ceremonies, in no temples, because in Rome and in Greece those who worshipped the gods, did it in order to win their help, through fear, but nobody thought to love them.

And, though he had his mind occupied with Lygia, and his attention with looking for her among the crowd, he could not help but see these wonderful and uncommon things which were taking place around him. Meanwhile a few more torches were thrown on the fire, which flooded the cemetery with a red gleam and darkened the light of the lanterns, and in the same moment an old man with a hooded cloak, with his head uncovered, came out of the hypogeum and stood upon a

stone laying near the fire.

The crowd swayed at his sight. Voices near Vinicius began to whisper: "Petrus! Petrus! ..." Some kneeled down, othes stretched their hands toward him. A silence so profound followed, that one could hear the embers falling from the torch, the distant rattling of wheels on the Nomentanian road and the rustling of the wind through a few pine trees growing near the cemetery.

Chilo inclined to Vinicius and whispered:

That is he! the first disciple of Christ,—the fisherman!"

The aged man raised his hand and blessed those present with a sign of a cross; all fell upon their knees. Vinicius and his companion' lest they would betray themselves, followed the example of the others. Vinicius could not grasp the situation at once. It seemed to him that the figure he saw before him was simple yet impressive, and moreover, it was impressive because of its simplicity. The old man had neither a mitre on his head, nor an oaken wreath upon his temples, no palta branch in his hand, no golden tablet on his breast, nor robes, white or sprinkled with stars,-in a word no such emblems as were worn by the Oriental, Egyptian and Greek priests or Roman flamins. And again Vinicius was struck by the same difference, which he felt hearing the Christian songs, for this fisherman also seemed to him not a certain high priest, skilled in ceremonies, but á simple, aged and venerable witness, who came from a far-off land to-relate some truth, which he saw and which he touched, in which he believed as one believes in the reality, and loved for just the reason that he believed. In his face was such a power of conviction, as' truth itself has. And Vinicius, who being a sceptic did not wish to yield to his teaching, but had a feverish curiosity to know what would follow from the lips of this 'companion of that mysterious "Chrestus" and what that religion was which Lygia and Pomponia Griecina confess.

Meanwhile Peter began to speak. He first spoke like a father, who admonishes his children and instructs them how to live. He commanded them to renounce luxuries and pleasures, and to love poverty, purity of customs, truth, to suffer patiently wrongs and persecutions, obey the elders and the government, to evade treason, falsehood and calumny, and finally, to give a good example to each other and even to the pagans. Vinicius, to whom the only good was that which could return Lygia to him', and bad-everything that stood as an obstacle between them, was touched and angered by some of these advices; it semed to him that the old man, recommending purity and a struggle with desires, dared not only to condemn his love, but lured Lygia from him and strengthened her in her resistance. He understood that if she was among those assembled and heard those words, she would consider him an enemy of her religion and an abject

man. At this thought he was seized with anger; "What news did I hear? " he said to himself. "This is an old teaching? Every one knows this, everyone heard this. For the cynics too recommend poverty and a restriction of necessities; for Socrates also recommended virtue as an old but a good thing; for the best stoic, even a Seneca, who has live hundred tables of lemon-wood, praised moderation, recommended the truth, patience in adversity, constancy in calamities, and that all is like state grain, which the mice eat, but the people do not want to eat it because it smells from age." And besides anger, he experienced a feeling of disappointment, for he expected a discovery of some unknown magic secrets, and at least he thought that he would hear a rhetor of astonishing eloquence; instead he heard but simple words deprived of all ornaments. He was amused at the stillness and the attention with which the people were listening. But the old man continued to speak to those attentive listeners, told them that they must be gobd, peaceful, >just, poor and pure, not only in order to have peace during their life, but to live eternally in Christ after death, in such a joy, in such a gloryy in such a happiness, as no one had yet experienced on earth. And here Vinicius, although unfavorably prejudiced a moment ago, could not help but notice that there was a difference between the teaching of the aged man, and that of the cynics, the stoics or other philosophers, for they recommended good and virtue as a reasonable and the only practical thing in life, while he promised immortality for it, not some poor immortality under the earth, in tediousness, emptiness and desertedness, but a magnificent one equal almost to the existence of gods. He spoke moreover of it as of a thing absolutely sure, therefore in the presence of such a faith virtue assumed a priceless value, and the misfortunes of life became trivial. To suffer temporarily for the sake of endless happinsss is different from suffering only because such is the order of nature. But the old man said further that virtue and truth should be loved for themselves, because God is all-powerful, existing before ages, good and virtuous—therefore who loves them, loves God and by this becomes Ipis beloved child. Vinicius did not comprehend this, but he knew from the words which Pomponia Græcina addressed to Petronius, that this God is, according to the belief of Christians, the only God, and all-

powerful, therefore when he now heard that he is all-good and all-just, he thought involuntarily, that compared with such a Demiurge,—Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo, Juno, Vesta aud Venus were like some poor and noisy crowd that ravage all together, but each for his own benefit. But the greatest astonishment seized Vinicius when the aged man began to teach that God is also all-love—therefore who loves men, fulfills his supreme commandment. But it is not enough to love people from ones' own nation, for the God-man shed his blood for all and has found among the pagans his chosen ones, as Cornelius the centurion, and it is not sufficient to love those who do us good, because Christ even forgave the Jews, who delivered him to the cross, and the Boman soldiers who nailed him to the cross, so we must not only forgive those who wrong us, but love them and return wrong with good; and it is not sufficient to love good people; but we must also love the bad ones, for only with love is it possible to exterminate the wickedness from them. Chilo upon hearing these words thought his work was in vain and that Ursus would never kill Glaucus to-night nor any other night. However he consoled himself immediately with another conclusion, extracted from the teaching of the old man: namely, that Glaucus would not dare to kill him even though he discovered and recognized him. However, Vinicius no longer thought that there was nothing new in the words of the old man, but with astonisment he asked of himself the question: "What God is this? What teaching is this? What kind

of people are they?"

All that he heard did not find room in his confused mind. This was a confusion of new ideas. He felt that if he wished to follow this teaching, he would have' to sacrifice his former ideas, customs, character and whole nature and change his entire life. The teaching which commanded him to love the Parthians, Syrians, Greeks, Egyptians, Gauls and Britons, to forgive his enemies, to pay them with good for bad, and to love them, seemed madness to him, while at the same time he had a feeling that in this madness there was something more powerful than in all philosophies he had yet heard of. He thought that because of its madness it was impossible to fulfill—and because of its impossibility, divine. He rejected it from his soul, but he felt that from it as from a meadow full of flowers there came some intoxicating odor, which, if once inhaled, one will, as

in the country of the Lotofagians, forget everything else and yearn only for it. It seemed to him that there is nothingreal in it, and at the same time that reality, compared with it, is something so poor that it is not worth the while to stop to think of it. Heights of some kind surrounded him, which were unthought of before. That cemetery began to» appear to him as a gathering place of madmen, and also as a mysterious and terrible place, upon which, as if on a mystic bed, something was being born which did not exist in the world before. He thought of all the old man had said of life, of truth, of love, of God, and his thoughts were dazzled from the brightness, as the eyes are dazzed from continuous flashes of lightning. As is usual with people whose life evolves upon one passion, he thought of all this through his love for Lygia, and by the light of the fire he saw one thing clearly: if Lygia is present in the cemetery, if she confesses this religion, she will never become his mistress.

The fossor added a few torches to the fire, the wind ceased to rush through the pine trees, the flame ascended evenly, with a slender point towards the stars glistening on rhe serene sky, while the old man, mentioning the death of Christ, now talked of him only. All held their breath, and the silence became so great that it was possible to hear the beat of the hearts. This man hast seen; and he related like one to whom every moment was engraved in his memory. He told how returning from the Cross they stayed with John in the chamber for two days and two nights, neither sleeping nor eating, in oppression, sorrow, fear and doubt, holding their heads in their hands and meditating that He died. Oh! how painful it was! how painful! The third day came and the dawn whitened the walls, but they with John were sitting under the wall without any help or hope. The desire for sleep tortured them, for the night before the torture they passed in sleeplessness. They bestirred themselves, again and began to lament. When, hardly had the sun risen, Maria of Magdala rushed in breathless, with dishevelled hair and crying: "They have taken the Lord!" Hearing this they sprang up and ran toward the sepulchre. But John, a younger man, arriving first noticed the empty grave and dared not enter. Only when there were three of them at the entrance, he, Peter, entered. He found the shirt and the wrapping sheets upon the stone, but he did not find the body.

Therefore fear overcame them, for they thought that the. priests had carried Christ away, and they returned home in still greater oppression. Then other disciples came and were lamenting. They were disheartened, for they expected that the Master would redeem Israel, and it now was the third day since he died, so they did not understand why the Father deserted the Son; and the disciples preferred to die, so heavy was the burden.

The remembrance of those terrible moments even now forced two tears from the eyes of the aged man, which were Visible by the light of the fire, flowing down his gray beard. His old head, devoid of hair, began to tremble, and his voice became low. Vinicius thought to himself: "This man speaks the truth and weeps over it!" Sorrow seized' the simple-hearted listeners. They had heard more than once the story of Christ's torture, and it was known to them that joy will follow the sorrow; but, as this was related by an apostle who has seen it, they wrung their hands, sobbing, or beat their breasts.

But slowly they were calmed, as they desired to hear more. The aged man closed his eyes, as if wishing to see distant

things in his soul, and continued:

"When they lamented thus, Maria of Magdala rushed in again, exclaiming that she saw the Lord. Not being able to recognize Him on account of the great brightness, she thought it was a gardener, but He said, <sup>1</sup> Maria!' Then she cried, 'Rabboni!' and she fell to His feet, while He ordered her to go to the disciples, and then disappeared. But they, the disciples, did not believe her, and as she was weeping from joy, some were censuring her, others thought that sorrow had troubled her senses, for she also said that she saw angels in the grave, while she, running up the second time, found the grave empty. Then, in the evening, Kleofas came, who was going with another person towards Emmaus, and they returned quickly, saying, 'Indeed the Lord had risen.' And they began to dispute with the doors closed from the fear of Jews. Suddenly He stood amongst them, though the doors creaked not, and when they were benumed, He said, 'Peace be with you!'

"And I saw Him, as all have seen, and He was like the brightness and the happiness of our hearts, for we believed

that He arose from the dead, and that the seas will dry out, the mountains will change to dust, but His glory shall not. pass away.

"And after eight days Thomas Didymus put his fingers into Christ's wounds and touched His side, and then fell to His feet and cried, 'My Lord and my God!' Who answered to him, 'As thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who did not see me and have believed, 'And these words we heard and our eyes gazed upon Him, for He wasamong us."

Vinicius was listening and something strange was taking place m him. He forgot for a moment where he was. He began to lose the feeling of reality, measure and judgment. He stood in the presence of two impossibilities. He could not believe what the old man related, and he felt that one must be blind and renounce his own reasoning in order toadmit that that man who said, "I have seen," was lying. There was something in his emotion, in his tears, in his whole figure, and in the circumstances of the events which he had related, that made all suspicions impossible. At moments it seemed to Vinicius that he was dreaming, but around him he saw the silent crowd; the soot of the lanterns reached his nostrils; there the torches were burning, while near by, on the stone, stood an old man on the verge of his grave, with his head trembling, who,' giving testimony, was repeating, 111 have seen.

And he related to them all up to the Ascension to Heaven. At times he was resting, for he spoke very circumstantially, but it was felt that each minute detail was engraved in his memory as on a stone. Ecstasy seized those who listened to him. They threw the hoods from their heads in order to hear better and not to lose any of these words, which were priceless to them. It seemed to them that some superhuman power carried them over to Galilea-, that they are walking together with the disciples along those groves and at those waters, that this cemetery has changed into the Tiberidus lake, and on the shore, in a morning mist, stands Christ, as he was standing when John, looking out from the boat, said, "It is the Lord!" and Peter threw himself into the water to swim in order to reach the beloved feet. Endless ecstasy and measureless love was noticed on all faces.

It was evident that during the long narrative of Peter some of them had visions, and wiien he began to relate' how, at the moment of Ascension, the clouds began to close under the feet of the Savior and veil Him, and cover Him from the eyes of the apostles, all heads werb raised involuntarily towards the sky, and a moment of expectation followed, as if these people had hope of seeing Him, or as if they expected that He will descend again from the heavenly fields in order to see how the old apostle feeds the sheep intrusted to him and to bless him and his flock.

And in this moment there existed no Rome for these people, there was no mad Caesar, there were no temples nor pagan gods—there was only Christ, who filled the earth, the

sea, the heaven, the world.

In the distant houses scattered along the Via Nomentana cocks began to crow, announcing midnight. At that moment Chilo pulled the corner of Vinicius' cloak and whispered:

<sup>4</sup> • Master, there, not far from the aged man, I see Urban, .

and at his side some maiden."

Vinicius shook as if from a dream and, turning in the direction indicated by the Greek, noticed Lygia.

### CHAPTER XXI.

Every drop of blood quivered in the young patrician at the sight of, her. He forgot the crowds, the old man, his own amazement at these incomprehensible things which he heard—and he saw only her before him. At last, after all, exertions, after long days of uneasiness, of worrying, of suffering, he found her! For the first time in his life he felt that joy might throw itself upon one's breast like a wild beast, and press it till it was no more. He, who judged till now that fortune was duty-bound to fulfill all his desires, now. hardly believed his own eyes and his own happiness. If not for this disbelief, his impetuous nature would desire some fash step, but he wished to convince himself first whether, it was not the continuance of these miracles which filled his head, and whether he was not dreaming. But there was no doubt; he saw Lygia, and he was separated from'her

by barely fifteen steps. She stood in the light, therefore he could satiate himself with her sight as much as he liked. The hood slipped off from her head and dishevelled her hair; her mouth was somewhat open, her eyes were raised toward the Apostle, she was attentive and delighted. In a cloak of dark wool, she was dressed like a girl of common people. Vinicius however never saw her more beautiful, and notwithstanding all the tumult which rose in him, he was struck by the nobility of her wonderful head in contrast to her dress, almost that of a slave. Love burned in him like an immense flame, mingled with some feeling of yearning, worshipping, admiration and desire. He felt the delight which the sight of her caused him, and he satiated himself with it as if with life-giving water after a long thirst. Standing by the side of the gigantic Lygian, : she seemed smaller than before, almost a child; he noticed. also that she had grown more slender. Her complexion was almost transparent; it made an impression of a flower upon him. But the more he gazed upon her, the more he desired to possess her; she was so different from the women he saw or possessed in the Orient and in Rome. He felt that he would give them all for her, and with them Rome and thewhole world in addition.

He would have remained gazing, and would have forgotten himself altogether but for Chilo, who pulled the corner of his cloak lest he should do something which would endanger them. The Christians meanwhile began to pray and to sing. After awhile thundered the "Maranatha," and then the Great Apostle began to baptize from the fountain those who were presented by the presbyters as ready for baptism. To Vinicius it seemed that that night would never end. He wished as soon as possible to follow Lygia, and to seize her on the way or in her house.

At last some began to leave the cemetery. Then Chilo whispered:

<sup>11</sup> Let us go, master, before the gate, as we have not removed our hoods, and people are looking at us."

Chilo's advice seemed prudent. Standing at the gate they could watch all those coming out, and it was easy to recognize Ursus by his size and posture.

"We shall follow them," said Chilo. "We shall see what house they enter, and to-morrow, or yet to-day, thou

wilt surround all the entrances to the house with slaves, and take her."

"No!" said Vinieius.

"What dost thou intend to do?"

"We shall enter the house after her, and we shall carry her away immediately; for didst thou not undertake this, Croton?"

"Yes," said the lanista, "and I give myself up to thee, master, as a slave, if I do not break the backbone of this

buffalo who is guarding her."

But Chilo began to dissuade and to implore them by all the gods not to do this. Croton was taken only for defense in the case of them having been recognized, but not for the carrying away of the maiden. Taking her, being only two, they will expose themselves to death, and, moreover, they might let her escape from their hands, and then she will hide herself in another place or will leave Rome. And what will they do then? Why not act with certainty? Why expose themselves to peril and the whole undertaking to an uncertain fate?

Vinieius, though restraining himself with the utmost exertion from seizing Lygia in his arms right there in the the cemetery, felt however that the Greek was right, and may be he would follow his advice, if not for Croton, to whom

the reward was of much consideration.

"Master, order that drone to be silent," he said, "or permit me to let down my fist upon his head. Once in Burentum, whither I was brought to games by Lucius Saturninus, was attacked in a tavern by seven drunken gladiators, and none of them escaped with whole ribs. I do not say to seize the maiden now from among the crowd, for they could throw stones under our feet, but once she will be at home, I will carry her away and bring her wherever thou likest.",

Vinieius was overjoyed to hear these words, and answered:

<sup>1</sup> 'By Hercules, so it shall be! To-morrow we may not find her at home accidentally, and if we scare them, they would lead her away undoubtedly."

"This Lygian seems awfully strong to me!" moaned Chilo.

"Thou art not asked to hold his hands," answered Croton.

They bad to wait long, and the cocks began to crow at

the dawn, before they saw Ursus coming out from the gate and Lygia with him. Some other persons were accompany-

ing them. To Chilo it seemed that he recognized the Great Apostle among them, while at his side walked an old man, considerably lower in stature, two women who were not young, and a boy who was lighting the way with his lantern. This handful was followed by a crowd numbering about two hundred persons. Vinicius, Chilo and Croton mingled themselves With this crowd.

"Yes, master," said Chilo, "thy maiden is under powerful protection. That is he, the Great Apostle, with her—for

look how people are kneeling in front of him."

The people were kneeling down, but Vinicius did not look at them. Not losing Lygia for a moment from his eyes, he was thinking only of her seizure, and accustomed to artifices of all kinds in the wars, he was arranging with the precision of a soldier the whole plan of the seizure. He felt that the step he was taking was bold, but he knew well that bold attacks usually end successfully. The road was long, .however, therefore at times he thought of the abysses which were between himself and Lygia by that wonderful religion which she confessed. Now he understood all that happened in the past, and he understood why it did happen. He was sufficiently penetrating for this. For he knew not Lygia till now. He saw in her a maiden more beautiful than all others, a maiden for whom his feelings caught fire; but now he learned that that teaching was making her a different being from other women, and the hope that she should also be attracted by feelings, desire, wealth, pleasure, was an empty illusion. He understood at last that which he and Petronius did Hot understand, namely, that this new religion was implanting into the soul something unknown to the world in which he lived, and that Lygia, even if she loved him, would not sacrifice her Christian truths for him; that if pleasure exists for her, it is quite different from that which he, Petronius, Caesar's court, and the whole Rome were pursuing. Every on'e of the women he knew<sup>1</sup> could become his mistress—this Christian girl could become only his victim.

And thinking of this, he was experiencing burning pain and anger, and he felt at the same time that that anger was powerless. To carry away Lygia seemed a possible thing to him, and he was almost certain of this, but he was also ceritain that, in the presence of this teaching, he himself, his valiancy, his power, was nothing, and that he will not get.

the better of it. That Roman military tribune, convinced that, the power of the sword and the fist, which conquered the world, shall rule it always—saw for the first time in his life that something else might be beyond it, therefore he asked himself with amazement: "What is it?"

And he was not able to answei himself clearly. But he become -collected again by the complaints of Chilo, who began to bewail his own fate; he was hired to find Lygia, whom he found with danger to his own life, and pointed lier out. But what else do they want from him? Did he undertake to carry her away, and who could demand even anything like this from a poor cripple, deprived of two fingers-from an old man, given up to meditations, science and virtue? What will happen if such a worthy lord as Vinicius shall meet some injury while carrying the maiden away? Certainly, the gods ought to watch over the chosen ones; but do not such things happen more than oncé, as if the gods were playing dice, instead of looking at what was taking place in the world? Fortune, as is known, is blindfolded; it sometimes does not see in daylight; what can be expected at night time? Let something happen—let this bear of a Lygian throw a millstone at the noble Vinicius, a barrel of wine, or, what is worse, of water,—who will guarantee whether responsibility instead of the reward will not fall upon the poor Chilo? He, the poor sage, became attached to the noble Vinicius, like Aristotle to Alexander of Macedon, and if at least the noble Vinicius would give him that purse which he put behind his belt on going out there would be something with which to summ'on help immediately. or to assuage the Christians themselves. Qh, why do they not wish to hear the advices of an old man, which

Vinicius, hearing this, took out the purse from behind

his belt and threw it at Chilo. "Take it and be silent."

are dictated by prudence and experience?

The Greek felt that it was unusually heavy and he gained

"All my hope is in this," he said, "that Hercules or Tezeus accomplished deeds more difficult, and what is my personal and dearest friend, Croton, if not Hercules? Thee, worthy master, I shall not call a demigod, for thou art a whole god, and thou wilt not forget in the future the poor but faithful servant whose needs it is necessary to provide

for from time to time, for he himself, when once sunk into his books, does not care for anything else.... Some few stadia of garden and a little house, even with the smallest portico for coolness in summer, would be something worthy of such a donor. Meanwhile I shall admire from a distance your heroic deeds, invoke Jove to favor you, and in case of need I shall make such a noise that half of Rome will wake up and come to your assistance. What a bad and uneven road! The olive oil is all burned out in my lantern, and if Croton, who is equally noble as he is strong, wanted to take me in his arms and carry me to the gate, he would learn, first, whether he could easily carry the maiden; second, he would act like JEneas, and finally he would win over all the more honest gods to such a degree that I would be perfectly at peace as to the result of the undertaking."

"I would prefer to carry the carcass of a sheep which croaked of mange a month ago," answered the lanista; "but if thou wilt give me that purse which the worthy tribune has thrown to thee I shall carry thee to the gate."

"Knock the great toe out of thy foot," answered the Greek. "Thus didst thou profit from the teaching of that virtuous old man, who represented poverty and pity as the two foremost virtues.... Did not he plainly command thee to love me? I see that I shall never make of thee even a poor Christian, and that it is easier for the sun to penetrate the walls of the Mamertiman prison than for the truth to penetrate the skull of a hippopotamus."

Croton, who possessed a beastly strength, but had no

human feelings, whatever, said:

"Never fear. I shall not become a Christian. I do not wish to lose my bread."

"Yes, but if thou hadst even the elementary knowledge

of philosophy thou wouldst know that gold is vanity."

"Come to me with thy philosophy, and I shall give thee only one blow with my head at thy belly, and we shall see who will win."

",An ox could answer the same to Aristotle," answered Chilo.

It was growing lighter. The dawn covered the edges of the walls with a pale color. The trees near the road, the buildings and thp tombstones scattered here and there began to emerge from the shadow. The road was no longer empty. The venders of vegetables were hurrying toward the gates, leading donkeys and mules ioaded with kitchen herbs; here and there wagons were creaking, upon which game was brought. On the road and at both sides there lay a light fog, announcing clear weather. People seen from a distance in this fog looked like ghosts. Vinicius was looking at the slender form of Lygia, which; in proportion as the light was increasing, was becoming more and more silvery.

"Master," said Chilo, "I would offend thee if I would' foresee that thy liberality would end at any time, but now, when thou has paid me, thou canst not accuse me that I am speaking for my own interest only. And I advise thee once more that, learning in which house the divine Lygia lives, thou shouldst return home for slaves and a litter, and shouldst not listen to that elephant's trunk, Croton, who undertakes to carry the maiden alone for this purpose only: that he wants to squeeze thy purse like a bag of fresh cheese."

"' Thou wilt have from me a blow of the list between thy shoulder-blades, which means that thou wilt perish," said Croton.

"Thou wilt have with me a measure of ICephalonian wine; that means that I shall be sound," answered the Greek

Vinicius did not answer, for they approached the gate, near which a wonderful aspect struck their eyes. Two soldiers knelt down as the Apostle was passing, while he held his hands for a moment upon their iron helmets, and then made a sign of a cross above them. It never came to the mind of the young patrician that there could be Christians among the soldiers, and he thought with astonishment that, as in a burning city the fire continually embraces new houses, so this teaching evidently embraces new souls every day and spreads beyond all human comprehension. This struck him also with reference to Lygia, for he convinced himself that if she wished to flee from the city there would be guards found who would facilitate her escape themselves. Therefore he blessed all the gods now that it did not happen thus.

Having passed spaces covered with buildings, the groups of Christians beyond the wall began to scatter. Now they had to follow Lygia, and more carefully so as not to rouse

their attention. Chilo began to complain of wounds and shooting pains in his legs, and remained in the rear more and more, which Vinicius did not oppose, judging that the cowardly and imbecile' Greek would be of no use to him at present; He would even permit him to go wherever he likes, but, though the worthy sage was restrained by his circumspection, still he was pushed onward by his curiosity, as he followed them, at times even approaching them, repeating his former advices and making suppositions that the old man accompanying the Apostle, if not for his rather too low' stature, could be Glaucus.

They walked for a long time, finally reaching the Trans-Tiber; the sun was already near its rise when the group in which Lygia was separated. The Apostle, the old woman i and the boy went alongside of the river, While the old man of lower stature, Ursus and Lygia slipped into a narrow vicus, and going about one hundred steps, they entered the vestibule of a house in which there were two shops, one of an olive vender, the other of a poultry keeper.

Chilo, who -was following Vinicius and Croton about fifty yards in the rear, stopped immediately, as if fixed to the ground, and pressing himself up to the wall, he began to

hiss at them to return to him.

They did so, for they had to hold counsel.

"Go," said Vinicius, "and see whether this house has

any exits upon another street."

- Čhilo, though he complained before of wounds on his legs, sprang up as lively as if he had the wings of Mercury at his ankles, and he returned in a while.

"No," he said, "There is only one exit." Then he fold-

ed his hands.

"By Jupiter, Apollo, Vesta, Cybele, Iris and Osiris; by Metra, Baal, and by all gods of the East and West, I entreat thee, master, to desist from this design. Listen to me—"

But he stopped suddenly, for he noticed that the face of Vinicius became pale from excitement while his eyes glistened like the eyes of a wolf. It was enough to look at him to understand that nothing in the world would keep him from the undertaking. Croton began to draw his breath like a Hercules and to sway his undeveloped skull from side to side, as the bears do when confined in a cage. However, there was not the least uneasiness expressed in his face.

" I will enter first," lie said.

"Thou wilt follow me," said Vinicius in an imperative voice

And in a while they both disappeared in the dark vestibule. Chilo sprang to the corner of the neasest street and be-

gan to observe from behind the angle, waiting for what would take place.

### CHAPTER XXII.

Only when he had reached the vestibule did Vinicius understand the difficulty of the undertaking. The house was a large one, of several stories, like thousands that were built in Rome in view of the gain from renting the fiats, and usually built so hurriedly and poorly that scarcely does a year pass without some of them falling upon the heads of the tenants. These were veritable beehives, too high and too narrow, full of closets and cells, in which nestled the poor and numerous populace. In the city, in which many streets had no names, those houses had no numbers either; the owners intrusted the collection of rent to the slaves. However, they were not obliged by the city government to give the names of the tenants, and oftentimes did not know them themselves. To find a person in such a house was often very difficult, especially when there was no porter at the gate.

Vinicius and Croton went through a long corridor, which led to -a narrow courtyard, closed in from four sides by walls, forming an atrium common for the whole house, with a fountain in the centre, whose stream was falling into a stone basin fixed into the ground. At all the walls there were external stairways, partly of stone, partly of wood, leading to the galleries, from which there were entrances to the lodgings. Downstairs there were also lodgings, some of which were provided with wooden doors, others separated from the courtyard by woolen curtains only, mostly raveled

out and torn or patched.

The hour was early and there was not a living soul in the yard. Evidently all were sleeping except those who had returned from Ostrianum.

"What shall we do, master?" asked Croton, stopping.

"Let us wait here; maybe somebody will appear," answered Vinicius. "We should not be seen in the court-

yard."

But he thought at the same time that the advice of **Chilo** was practical. If he had some fifty slaves he could surround the gate, which seemed the only exit, and search all the lodgings—while this way it was necessary to find Lygia's lodgings at once, for otherwise Christians, of whom, probably there was no lack in this house, could warn her that they were Seeking her. For this reason it was dangerous even to inquire of strange persons. For a while Vinicius considered whether it would not be better to return home after slaves, when suddenly, from under one of the curtains covering the more distant lodgings, came **a man** with a sieve in his hand and approached the fountain.

The young man recognized Ursus at the first glance.

"That is the Lygian," whispered Vinicius. "Shall I break his bones right away?"

"Wait."

Ursus did not notice them, for they stood in the shadow of the vestibule, and began quietly to rinse the vegetables in the sieve; it was evident that, after the entire night spent in the cemetery, he intended to prepare a breakfast of them. After a while, finishing his function, he took the wet sieve and disappeared behind the curtain. Croton **and** Vinicius started after him, judging that they would rush in directly into Lygia's lodging.

Therefore their astonishment was not trivial when they noticed the curtain was dividing net a lodging, but a second dark corridor from the courtyard, at the end of which a little garden was seen, composed of some cypresses, a few myrtle bushes, and a small house stuck to a blind wall of

another building.

Both understood that this was a favorable circumstance for them. On the courtyard there could be formed a riotous assembly of all tenants, while the remoteness of the little house facilitated the undertaking. They will finish up quickly with the defenders, or rather with Ursus. After the seizure of Lygia they will reach the street equally quick, and there they will know what to do. Most likely no one will accost them, and, if accosted, they will say that they

are taking back Cæsar's hostage, who ran away, and in an 'extreme case Vinicius would let the vigils recognize him and summon their assistance.

Ursus was about to enter the little apartment when the sound of steps attracted his attention; so he halted, and, seeing two men, he put his sieve upon a balustrade and turned toward them.

"What do you want here?" he asked.

"Thee," answered Vinicius'.

Then, turning to Croton, he said, in a quick, low voice: "Kill."

Croton rushed like a tiger, and in one instant, before the Lygian was able to think and to recognize the enemies, he

was caught in the steel arms of Croton.

But Vinicius was too certain of his superhuman strength to wait for the end of the struggle, so, passing them, he sprang to the door of the little house, pushed it in aud found himself in a dark chamber, lighted only by the fire burning in the chimney. The light of the fire was falling directly upon the face of Lygia. The other person, sitting by the fireside, was that old man who was accompanying the maiden and Ursus on the road from Ostrianum.

Vinicius rushed in so suddenly that before Lygia was able to recognize him he seized her by the waist, and, raising her, he rushed through the door. True, the old man barred his way, but Vinicius, pressing the maiden to his breast with one hand, shoved him away with his other hand. The hood fell off his head, and at the sight of that face, known to, her and terrible at that moment, the blood stiffened in Lygia. from fright and her voice died in her throat. She wanted to call for help, but could not. Also vainly she attempted to seize the frame of the door in order to offer resistance. Her fingers slipped along the stone, and she would have fainted were it not for the terrible picture which struck her eyes when Vinicius rushed with her into the garden.

Ursus was holding in his arms a man entirely bent backwards, with his head hanging down and mouth covered with blood. Seeing them, he struck the head once more yrith his. fist, and in an instant he sprang toward Vinicius like an enraged beast.

"Death!" thought the young patrician.

And then lie heard', as if in a dream, the shout of Lygia:

"Don't kill 1" After which he thought that something like a thunderbolt had loosened his hands, with which he was embracing her. Finally the earth seemed to whirl and daylight was extinguished in his eyes.

Chilo, however, concealed behind the angle of the corner, waited for what would take place, as curiosity struggled with fear within him. He thought that if they will be successful in carrying Lygia away, it will be well to be near Vinicius. He did not fear Ursus any more for he was sure Croton would kill him. On the other hand, he thought in an event of a crowd gathering upon the streets, yet empty, if Christians or any other people wished to offer resistance to Vinicius, then he would speak to them as the representative of the authorities, as the executor of Caesar's will, and in a case of extremity he would summon the vigils to the aid of the young patrician against the street rabble, and with this he would win new favors. In his soul he always judged that the action of Vinicius was imprudent. Considering, however, Croton's terrible strength, he supposed that it might be successful. If it should go bad with them, the tribune himself will carry off the maiden and Croton will clear the way. The time was growing very long for him; he was alarmed at the silence of the vestibule, upon which he looked from afar.

11 If they do not find her hiding place and make a noise

they will scare her."

-And the thought of this was not unpleasant to him either, for he understood that in such case he would again be necessary to Vinicius, and would be able to again squeeze a nice sum of sestertias out of him.

"Whatever they do," he thought, "they do this for me, though none of them suspects this, 0 gods! 0 gods! per-

mit me only to-"

And he stopped suddenly, for it seemed to him that something protruded from the vestibule; so, pressing close to the wall he began to look, holding his breath.

Arid he was not mistaken, for from the vestibule a head partiy emerged and began to look around.

After a while, however, it disappeared.

"That is Vinicius or Croton," thought Chilo. "But if they seized the girl why doesn't she scream? and why do they

look out upon the street? They have to meet people anyway, for, before they reach the Carinse there will be stirring in the city. What is that? By all the immortal gods!"

And suddenly his hair stood up on end.

In the gate appeared Ursus with the body of Croton hung over his shoulder, and looking around once more, he began to run toward the river through the empty street.

Chilo flattened himself against the wall like a piece of

plaster.

"I am lost if he notices me," he thought.

But Ursus passed the corner hurriedly and disappeared behind the next house. Chilo, not waiting any longer, began to run into a cross street, his teeth chattering, and with a swiftness that would astonish even a youth-.

"If, while returning, he should see me from a distance, he will overtake and kill me," he was saying to himself. "Save me, Zeus; save me, Apollo; save.me, Hermes; save me, 0 God of the Christians! I shall leave Rome, I shall return to Mesembria; but save me from the hands of this demon."

And this Lygian, who had killed Croton, seemed to him really some superhuman being at that moment. Even as he ran Chilo thought that this might be some god who had assumed the form of a barbarian. A that moment he believed in all the gods of the world, and in all myths, at which he usually laughed. He thought that Croton might have been killed by the God of the Christians, and again his hair was standing up on his head at the thought that he meddled with such a power.

Only when he had passed a few alleys and seen a number of workmen coming from a distance toward him was he calmed. He was already out of breath, so he sat down upon the threshold of a house and began to wipe his sweat-cov-

ered forehead with the corner of his cloak.

"I am old, and I need rest," he said.

The people coming toward him turned into some side street, and solitude embraced him once more. The city was yet sleeping. In the mornings the stir began earlier in the wealthier parts of the city, where the slaves of the rich were obliged to rise before the dawn, while in the parts inhabited by the free population maintained by the government, and therefore idle, they arose rather late, especially in winter

time. Chilo, sitting for some time on the threshold, felt a penetrating hunger, so he arose, and convincing himself that he did not lose the purse which he received from Vinicius,

he turned towards the river with a slower step.

"Perhaps I shall see the body of Croton," he said. " 0 gods! this Lygian, if he is a man, could make millions of sestertia during one year, for who could resist him if he strangled Croton like a puppy? For each appearance in the arena they would give him as much gold as he weighs' himself. He guards that girl better than Cerberus does the hell. But, may the hell swallow him, too!, I do not wish to have anything to do with him. He is too strong! What shall I do, however ? A frightful thing happened. If he broke the bones of Croton, then surely the soul of Vinicius also whines above that accursed house, waiting for the burial. By Castor! but he is a patrician, a friend of Caesar, a relative of Petronius, a lord known in the entire Rome, and a military tribune. His death will not be unpunished.... If, for instance, I should go to the camp of the pretorians, or to the vigils?"

Here he stopped and began to think, but after a while he said: "Woe to me! Who introduced him to that house if not I? His freedmen and slaves know that I used to come to him, and some of them know for what purpose. What will happen if they accuse me that I have shown him intentionall)- the house in which he has met death? Even if it was ^proven afterwards in the court that I did not wish it they will say that I am the cause anyway. And he is a patrician; so in no case will this come off unpunished to me. But were I to leave Rome silently and would move somewhere far away, I would put myself under a greater suspicion."

It was bad both ways. The question now was only to choose the lesser evil. Rome was an immense city, and still Chilo felt that it might be too small for him. " For any-- body else could go straight to the prefect of the vigils, relate what had happened, and, even if some suspicion would fall upon him, await quietly the inquest. But the whole past of Chilo was of such character that every closer acquaintance either with the prefect of, the vigils or the prefect of the city must bring upon him very serious troubles, and at the same time confirm all the supicions which could come to the heads of the officials.

On the other hand, to flee would be to confirm Petronius in the opinion that Vinicius was betrayed and murdered as a result of a conspiracy. And Petronius was a powerful man, who could have the police of the whole empire to his orders and who undoubtedly would try to find the guilty ones even to the end of the world. However, it came to Chilo's head whether it would not be better to go straight to him and to tell him what had happened. Yes, this was the best plan. Petronius was a peaceful man, and Chilo was certain at least that he would hear him to the end. Petronius, too, who knew the affair from the beginning, would believe more easily in the innocence of Chilo than the prefects.

In order to go to him, however, it was necessary to know for certain what happened to Vinicius, and this Chilo did not know. He saw, it is true, the Lygian prowling toward the river with the body of Croton, but nothing more. Vinicius could be killed, but he could also be wounded or seized. It camé to Chilo's mind that the Christians probably would not dare to kill such a powerful man, an. Augustian and a high military official, for an act of that kind could bring upon them a general persecution. It was more likely that they detained him by superior force, in order to give time to Lygia to hide

herself in another place.

This thought filled Chilo with hope.

"If that Lygian dragon did not rend him at the first impetus, then he is alive; and if he is alive, then he will give testimony himself that I did not betray him, and then not only am I not threatened, but—0 Hermes, count on two heifers again!—a new field opens before me.... I can let one of the freedmen know where to look for his master, and whether he shall go to the prefect or not it is his affair—if I only don't have to go to him.... I can also go to Petronius and rely on a reward.... I was looking for Lygia—now I shall look for Vinicius, and afterward Lygia again.... But it is necessary to-know, first, whether he is alive or dead."

Here it passed through his mind that he could go at night to the baker Demas and ask Ursus about this. But he gave up this idea immediately. He preferred to have nothing to do with Ursus. He could justly suppose that if Ursus did not kill Glaucus, then evidently he was warned, by some one of the Christian elders, to whom he confessed his intention, QUO VADIIS.

that this is an unclean affair and that some traitor warded to persuade him to do it. Besides, at the mere remembrance of Ursus, a shiver ran through Chilo's entire body. In, stead, he thought that at night he would send Eurycius after news from the house where the occurrence happened. Meanwhile he had to eat, take a bath, and have a rest. The sleepless night, the way to Ostrianum, and the flight from the Trans-Tiber wearied him really beyond all measure.

One thing consoled him permanently—he had with him two purses, one which Vinicius gave him at home and the other one which he threw to him on the return from the cemetery. Out of the consideration for this happy circumstance, as well as for all the excitements that he endured, he decided to eat more abundantly and to drink a better wine

than usually.

And when at last the hour of the opening of the wine shop had arrived, he did this in a measure so considerable that he forgot about the bath. Above all, he wanted to sleep, and drowsiness deprived him of strength to such a degree that he-returned to his lodging at Subura with a reel, ing step, where a slave woman, bought with Vinicius' money, was waiting for him.

There, entering the cubiculum, as dark as a den of a fox, he threw himself upon the bed and fell asleep in an instant.

He awoke in the evening, or rather he was awakened by the slave girl telling him to rise, for some one was looking for him and wanted to see him on important business.

The watchful Chilo came to his senses in a moment. Hastily throwing on a cloak with a hood, and ordering - the slave girl to move aside, he looked out circumspectly at first. And he became deathly pale, for through the door of the

cubiculum he perceived the gigantic form of Ursus.

At that sight he felt that his feet and his head were growing cold, that- his heart ceased to beat in his breast, that swarms of ants were walking over his back-.... For some time he could not speak, then, with his teeth chattering, he said, or rather moaned:

<sup>1</sup> 'Syra, I am not at home.... I don't know.... this....

good man....'

<sup>11</sup>1 told him that thou art at home and that thou art sleeping, master, "answered the girl. "And he wanted me to wake thee."

"0 gods!.... I will order thee...."

But Ursus, as if made impatient by the delay, approached the door of the cubiculum, and bowing down, lie thrust his head in:

"Chilo Chilonides," he said.

"Pax tecum! pax! pax!" answered Chilo. "0, best of the Christians! Yes, I am Chilo, but this is a mistake..... I do not know thee."

"Chilo Chilonides," repeated Ursus, "thy master, Vin-

icius, summons thee to go to him with me."

# PART II.

#### CHAPTER I.

A sharp pain awakened Vinicius. For a moment he could not understand where he was nor what was happening. He felt a dizziness and his eyes were covered with a mist. Gradually, however, his consciousness returned, and he perceived three persons bent over him. He recognized two. One was Ursus, the other the old man he had thrust aside while carrying off Lygia. The third, an utter stranger, was holding his left arm and touching it along the elbow up to the shoulder, causing him such a terrible pain that Vinicius, thinking it was some kind of a revenge, cried through his set teeth, 'I Kill me."

But they seemed not pay any attention to his words, as if not hearing them or as though they considered them the usual groan of suffering. Ursus, with his distressed and at the same time menacing face of a barbarian, was holding bundles of white cloth torn in long strips, while the old man was speaking to the person who was pressing the arm of Vinicius.

<sup>1</sup> 'Glaucus, art thou certain that the wound in the head is not mortal?"

"Yes,, worthy Cfispus," answered Glaucus. "Serving as a slave in the fleet, and afterwards living in Naples, I dressed

many wounds, and from the pay which this occupation brought me I ransomed myself and my relatives. The p ound in the head is slight. When this man (here he pointed lo Ursus) took away the girl from the youth and pushed him against the wall, the youth, while falling, protected himself with his hand, which he disjointed and broke, but through this saved his head and life."

"Thou hast had more than one of the brotherhood in thy care," answered Crispus, "and you are celebrated as a skill-

ful physician. Therefore I sent Ursus for thee."

"Who, on the road, confessed that yesterday he was

.ready to kill me."

and I, who know thee and thy love for Christ, explained to him that the traitor was not thee, but that unknown who wished to persuade him to murder."

" That was an evil spirit, but I took him for an angel,"

said Ursus, with a sigh.

"Thou wilt tell me this some other time," said Glaucus;

"but now we must think of the wounded."

And saying this he began to set the arm of Vinicius, who, although Crispus was sprinkling his face with water, fainted repeatedly from pain. This, however, was a happy circumstance for him, for he did not feel the pain of setting his foot in joint, nor the dressing of the broken shoulder, which Glaucus laid between two concave strips of wood and then tied quickly and strongly in order to keep them motionless.

But after the operation was over Vinicius recovered consciousness again and saw above him Lygia. She stood close to his bed, holding a copper bucket of water in which Glaucus from time to time dipped a sponge and moistened his

bead.

Vinicius gazed at her, but could not believe his eyes. It Was only after some time that he was able to whisper:

"Lygia."

At that sound the bucket trembled in her hand, but she looked at him with eyes full of sadness.

"Peace be with thee," she answered, in a low voice.

And she stood with extended'arms, with a face full of pity and sorrow, but he looked at her as if wishing to picture her, so that after his eyelids were closed her picture would remain under them still. He looked at her face, paler and

thinner than before, at the tresses of dark hair, at the poor dress of a workwoman. He gazed so persistently that under the influence of his look her snowy forehead began to grow rosy, and at first he thought that he would love her always, and second that that paleness of hers and her poverty was his work; that he had sent her away from a home where she was loved, and where she was surrounded by affluence and comfort, and thrust her into that squalid room and dressed her in that wretched robe of dark wool. Willingly would he dress her in the costliest brocades and in all jewels of the world; hence amazement, alarm and pity seized him, and such a sorrow overcame him that he would fall to her feet if he could move himself.

"Lygia," he said, <sup>11</sup> thou didst not consent to my death?"

And she answered with sweetness: <sup>11</sup> May God return health to thee."

For Vinicius, -who had a feeling of those wrongs, which he had inflicted on her before, and of this one which he tried to inflict on her recently, there was in Lygia's words a real balsam. He forgot in that moment that a Christian teaching could speak through her mouth. He only felt that a loved woraan was speaking, and that in her answer there was some personal tenderness and an almost superhuman goodness which was shaking him to the depths of his soul. As shortly before from pain, so now he grew weak from emotion. A certain faintness seized him, great and yet pleasant. He experienced a sensation as if he was falling somewhere into an abyss, but at the same time he felt that it was good, so he was happy. He also thought, in this moment of weakness, that a divinity was standing over him.

In the meantime Glaucus finished washing the wound in his head and applied to it a healing salve. Ursus went to the brass bucket, and, taking a goblet of water mixed with wine which stood on the table, put it to the wounded man's lips. Vinicius drank eagerly, after which he felt great relief. After the dressing of the wound the pain almost ceased. The wounds and bruises began to harden, complete consciousness returning to him.

"Give me another drink."

Lygia went with the empty cup to an adjoining room.

Meanwhile Cripsus, after a few words exchanged with Glaucus, approached the bed and said:

"Vinicius.. God did not permit thee to commit an evil deed, but preserved thee thy life so that thou shouldst come to thy reason in thy soul. He before whom a man is only dust delivered thee in our hands defenseless, but Christ, in whom we believe, ordered us to love even our enemies. And so we have dressed thy wounds, and, as Lygia has said, we will pray that God restores thee to health, but we cannot watch thee longer. Therefore, remain in peace, and think whether it would be well to persecute Lygia any longer, whom thou hast deprived of her guardians and home, and us who paid thee good for evil."

"You wish to leave me?" asked Vinicius.

"We desire to leave the house in which the persecution of the prefect of the city can reach us. Thy companion was killed, but thou who art powerful among the people lie wounded. This did not happen through our fault, but the anger of the law would fall upon us."

"Do not fear persecution. I will shield you."

Crispus did not want to answer him that with them it did not only concern the prefect and the police, but that not having confidence in him too—they wished to secure Lygia

from his further pursuit.

"Lord," he said—"thy right hand is sound—here are tables and stylus: write to thy servants that they should come to-night with a litter and carry thee away to thy house, in which it will be more comfortable for thee thanamidst our poverty. We live here with a poor widow—who will soon return with her son—and this lad will carry away thy letter, and we, we must all seek another refuge."

Vinicius grew pale,, for he understood they wanted to separate him from Lygia, and if he lost sight of her again—lie might lose her forever. It is true, he understood that between him and her things of great importance had come, whereof wishing to possess her he must look for some other means of which he had not yet time to think. He understood too, that whatever he might say to these people, even if he would swear to them that he would return Lygia to Pomponia Grsecina, thej' had the right to disbelieve him. He might have done this before; instead of persecuting Lygia he might have gone to Pomponia—and swore to her that he would renounce pursuit, and in such a case Pomponia herself would find Lygia and take her home. No!

He felt that no such promise would keep them back and that no solemn oath would be accepted, the more since, not being a Christian, he could swear only by the immortal gods ih whom he himself did not believe much, and whom they considered bad spirits.

He desperately desired to reconcile Lygia and her guardians by any means, but for that he needed time. With him it was important to look at her for a few days even. As every fragment of a board or oar seems to a drowning man salvation, so to him it seemed that during those few days he might be able to say something which would bring him to her, that may be he would think out something, that something favorable might happen. Therefore collecting his

thoughts he said:

"Listen to me, Christians. Yesterday I was with you in Ostrianum, and I heard your teaching; but even if I would not know it, your deeds would convince me that you are honest and good people. Tell that widow who lives in this house to remain in it. You remain, too, and allow me to remain. Let this man (here he turned his eyes to Glaucus), who is a physician, or at least understands dressing of wounds, say whether it is possible to carry me away to-day. I am sick and have a broken arm, which must remain immovable even a few days, and therefore I announce to you that I will not move from this place unless you bear me away by force."

Here he stopped, for breath failed in his broken breast,

and Crispus said:

"Nobody will use force against thee, lord. We will only carry away from here our own selves."

To this the young man, unaccustomed to resistance,

frowned and said:

"Allow me to catch my breath."

After a while he began to speak again:

"No one will inquire about Croton, whom Ursus choked. He was to go to-day to Beneventum, whither he was called by Vatinius, and so all will think that he departed. When we entered this house no one saw us except one Greek, who was with us in Ostrianum. I will tell you where he lives. Bring him to me and I will order him to be silent, for lie is a man paid by me.. I will write a letter to my house saying that I have also departed for Beneventum. If the Greek has already informed the prefect I will declare to him that

I have myself killed Croton, and that it was he who broke my arm. T will do so by the shades of my father and mother. Therefore you can remain here safely, for a hair will not fall from any head. Bring me the Greek who calls himself Chilo Chilonides."

"Then Glaucus will remain with thee, lord," said Crispus, "and together with the widow, will take care of you."

Vinicius frowned still more,

"Listen, old man, to what I will say," he said. "I owe thee gratitude, and you seem to be a good and honest man, but thou dost not tell me what thou thinkest in the bottom of thy soul. Thou fearest that I shall call my slaves and command them to take Lygia away. Isn't this so?"

"Yes it is," answered Crispus, with certain severity.

"Then notice what I will say to Chilo in your presence, and I will write home that I have departed, and hereafter I will find no other messengers but you. Consider this yourself, and do not irritate me any longer."

Here he became excited and his face grew red from anger,

and he began to speak excitedly:

" 'Hast thou thought that I will deny that I wish to remain in order to see her? A fool would guess it even though I deny it. But I will no more endeavor to take her by force. But to thee I will tell something else. If she will not remain here I will tear with this sound arm the bandaging from my wounded arm, I will take no food or drink, and may my death fall on thee and thy brothers. Why hast thou nursed me? Why didst thou not order to kill me?"

And he grew pale from anger and weakness. But Lygia, who, from an adjoining room, heard the whole conversation and who was sure that Vinicius would do what he intended, became frightened on account of his words. She did not want him to die for anything. Wounded and defenseless, he awoke pity but no fear. From the time of the flight, living among people sunk in continued religious passion, thinking only, of sacrifices and charity without bounds, she herself became enthusiastic with that new inspiration to such a degree that it took for her the place of house, family, lost happiness, and at the same time it made of her one of those Christian maidens who later changed the spirit of the world. Vinicius thought much of her fate and thrust himself so much on her that she could not forget him.

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She was thinking of him whole days, and more than once begged God for such a moment in which, following the spirit of doctrine, she might repay him with good for evil, with mercy for persecution, convert him, win him for Christ and save him. And now it seemed to her that such a moment had arrived and that her prayers were heard.

She approached Crispus with a face inspired and began

to speak as if some other voice spoke through her.

"Crispus, let him remain among us and we will remain

with him till Christ gives him health.

And the old presbyter, accustomed to seek in everything inspirations of God, seeing her exaltation, thought at once that a higher power may speak through her and, fearing in his heart, bent his head.

"Let it be so as thou sayest," he said. On Vinicius, who •during the whole time had not turned his eyes from her, this quick obedience made a wonderful impression. It seemed to him that Lygia was among Christians a kind of Sybilla or priestess who was surrounded by worship and obedience. And involuntarily he yielded himself to that worship. To the love which he now felt was joined as if a certain fear, in the presence of which the love itself almost became something audacious. Besides he could not familiarize himself with the idea that their relation was changed and that now not she on his, but he was dependent on her will, that he was lying sick, broken down, and that he ceased to be a persecuting power, and as if he was a defenseless child in her care. For his proud and willful character a similar relation toward any other person would be humiliation—but this time he not only didn't feel humiliated, but was thankful-to her, as to his emperor. These were unheard of feelings in him, which a day before he would believe impossible and which would astound him even now if he could give an aocount of them. But he did not ask why—it was an entirely natural affair—he merely felt happy that she remained. And he wished to thank her-with gratitude and yet with some other feeling, as far unknown to him that he even did not know what to name it, because it was simply humility. But his previous excitement exhausted him so that he was unable to speak, and thanked her only with his eyes, in which shone joy, that he would remain with her, and that he would be able to look at her to-morrow, a day after to-morrow, perhaps a long time. His joy was diminished only by the fear that she would loose that which he had gained. He became so timid that when Lygia gave him water again, he was seized by a desire to clasp her hand—but he was afraid. He, the same Vinicius who at the feast of Caesar had kissed her mouth with forcible means, and after her flight promised himself that he would drag her by the hair to the cubiculum, or would order her to be whipped.

## CHAPTER II.

Nevertheless he began to fear that some outside assistance might destroy his happiness. Chilo might have notified the prefect of the city or the freedmen at home of his disappearance, and in such an event a search of the house by the guards was probable. It is true that he thought for an instant that he could order them to capture Lygia and shut her up in his house, but he felt that he ought not to do so, and that he would not be capable of doing it. He was a wilful, audacious and corrupt man, and, if need be, inexorable; he was not, however, a Nero or a -Tygellinus. Military life left in him a certain feeling of justice and conscience, and he understood that such a deed would be monstrously vile. Perhaps, in an excess of anger and in possession of strength, he would be capable to commit this, but at that moment he -was tenderly moved, and he only cared that no-body should stand between him and Lygia.

He noticed with astonishment that from the moment Lygia took his part, neither she herself nor Crispus demanded from him any assurances, as if they were convinced that in the case of need some supernatural power would defend them. Vinicius, from the time that he heard the teaching and discourses of the Apostle, the difference between possible and impossible things began to fade away, and lie thought that this could be so. However, regaining his former coolness, he reminded them of what he said of the Greek, and again asked that Chilo should be brought to him. Crispus agreed to this, and it was decided to send Ursus. Vinicius, who, in the recent days before Ostrianuin, often without result dispatched his slaves to Chilo, indicated accu-

lately his lodging, then, writing a few words on a tablet,

turning to Crispus, said:

"I give a tablet, for he is a suspicious and cunning man, who often, when called by me, told my people that he was not at home, doing so when not having good news for me, as he feared my anger."

"If I only find him I will bring him here, whether he wishes or not," answered Ursus. Then, taking his mantle,

he went out hurriedly.

To find any one in Rome was not easy, even with the aid of best directions, but in such an instance the instinct of a forest man, and at the same time great knowledge of the city, helped Ursus, so that after a certain time he found himself in the lodging of Chilo. He did not recognize him, however. He had seen him but once in his life, and, moreover, in the night time. Besides, that proud and confident old man who persuaded him to kill Glaucus, was so unlike this Greek, bent in two from fright, that no one could suppose that it was the same person. Chilo, too, noticing that Ursus looked at him as on an entirely strange man, recovered from his first fright. The sight of the tablet with the writing of Vinicius pacified him still more. At least no suspicion threatened him that he led him purposely into an ambush. He thought, also, that the Christians didn't dare to raise their hand against such an eminent person. "And so Vinicius will shield me in a case of need," he said to himself, 11 for evidently he does not summon me to have me killed." Therefore, gaining courage again, he asked:

"Good man, did not my friend, the noble Vinicius, send for me a litter? I have swollen feet, and cannot walk so

far."

"No," answered Ursus; "we will go on foot."

"And if I refuse?"

"Don't do this, for you must go."

1 'I will go, but of my own will. Otherwise nobody could compel me, for I am a free man and a friend of the prefect of the city. Besides, as a sage, I have also means against violence, and know how to change people into trees and animals. But I will go, I will go, but will put on a warmer cloak and a hood so that the slaves of this vicinity should not recognize me, as they would constantly stop us to kiss my hands."

Saying this, he put on another cloak and lowered on his head a wide Gallic hood from fear that Ursus might recognize his features when they would go into a brighter light.

"Where dost thou lead me?" he asked Ursus on the road.

"To Trans-Tiber."

' I am not long in Rome, and never was here before, but

even here probably live people who love virtue."

But Ursus, who was a honest man, and heard Vinicius say that the Greek was with him in the cemetery on Ostrianum, and then saw them entering the house in which Lygia lived, stopped for a moment and said:

"Do not lie, old man, for thou wert to-day with Vin-

icius in Ostrianum, and under our gate."

"Oh," said Chilo, "so your house is on the Trans-Tiber? I am only a short time in Rome, and do not know the names, of the different quarters. Yes, it is so, my friend. I was under your gate and implored Vinicius in the name of virtue not to enter. I was also in Ostrianum, and dost thou know why? I have been working for some time over the 'conversion of Vinicius, and I wished that he might hear the eldest Apostle. May light penetrate his soul and thine Thou art a Christian, and wishest that truth overcome false-hood."

"It is so," answered Ursus; with humility.

Complete courage returned to Chilo.

"Vinicius is a mighty lord," he said, "and a friend of Caesar. Yet he listens often to the whispering of evil spirits. But if even one hair would fall from his head C;esar would revenge himself on all Christians."

"We are guarded by a greater power."

<sup>1</sup> 'Certainly, certainly. But what are you intending to dowith Vinicius?" asked Chilo, with renewed uneasiness.

'11 don't know. Christ commands mercy."

"Thou hast answered excellently. Remember it always, otherwise thou wilt fry in hell like a sausage on a frying pan."

Ursus sighed, and Chilo thought that he could always do what he liked with this terrible man in the moment of his first impulse. So, wishing to know how everything happened at the capture of Lygia, he continued to ask in the tone of a severe judge:

"How did you treat Croton? Speak, and do not tell un-

truths."

Ursus sighed a second time: "Vinicius will tell thee

"That means that thou stabbed him with a knife or killed him with a club."

"I was unarmed."

The Greek could not withstand an admiration of the superhuman strength of the barbarian.

"May Philo—that is to say—may Christ pardon thee." They walked for some time in silence. Then Chilo said:

1 ' It will not be me who will betray thee, but look out for guards."

"I am afraid of Christ, but not of guards."

"And this is also just.- There is no heavier crime than murder. I will pray for thee, but I do not know if even my prayers will help thee any unless thou make a vow that thou wilt never touch any one else with thy fingers."

"As it is, I did not kill purposely," answered Ursus.

Chilo, however, who desired to secure himself for every case, did not cease to abhor murder to Ursus and encourage him to the fulfillment of the vow. He also questioned him about Vinicius, but the Lygian answered to his questions unwillingly, repeating that he would hear from the mouth of Vinicius himself that which he ought-to hear. Speaking in this manner at last thejr passed the long road separating the Greek's dwelling from the Trans-Tiber, and found themselves before the house. Chilo's heart began to beat unquietly. From fear it seemed to him that Ursus began to to look at him with a certain greedy expression. "It is a small consolation for me"---he spoke to himself---"if he will kill me unwillingly, and I would prefer in any instance that paralysis might strike him, and together With him all the Lygians, which give, 0 Zeus, if thou art able." Meditating this way he wrapped himself stronger in his Gallic cloak, repeating that he feared the cold. Finally when they crossed the ante-chamber and first court-yard, they found thems'elves in a corridor leading to the little garden of the house. Chilo stopped suddenly and said:

"Allow me to draw breath, for otherwise I will not be able to speak with Vinicius and give him wholesome advice."

Saying this he stopped—for though he repeated to himself that no danger was threatening him, still at the thought that he would step among these mysterious people whom he

saw in Ostriaanum, his legs trembled under him. In the meantime singing began to reach his ears from the house.
"What is this?" he asked.

'1 Thou sayest that thou art a Christian, and dost not know that it is a custom among us to worship our Saviour by song after every nourishment, "answered Ursus. Myriam and her son must have returned, and may be the Apostle is with them, for he visits Crispus and the widow every day."
' 'Conduct me directly to Vinicius."

"Vinicius is in the same room with the others, forthat room is larger; the rest are only dark alcoves, to which we

only go to sleep. Let us enter. Thou wilt rest there."

And they entered. The room was dark, the evening was cloudy, wintery, and the flame of several lanterns did not entirely disperse the darkness. Vinicius conjectured rather than recognized Chilo in the hooded man; but Chilo, seeing: in the corner of the room a bedstead, and on it Vinicius,. started towards him-not looking at the others-as if convinced that it would be safest near him.

"0 lord! why didst thou not listen to my advices!" he

exclaimed, folding his hands.

"Hold your tongue," said Vinicius, "and listen." Here he began to look sharply into the eyes of Chilo and speak slowly but distinctly, as if he wished that his every word would be understood as a command and would remain onceforever in Chilo's memory. 'Croton threw himself on me to murder and rob me—thou dost understand? Then I killed him, and these people dressed the wounds I received in the struggle with him."

Chilo understood at once that if Vinicius spoke thus it must be in virtue of a certain agreement with the Christians, and in such a case desired to be believed. He saw this alsofrom the expression of his face, so in one moment, without showing either doubt or astonishment, raised his eyes in the

air and exclaimed:

'That was an arrant knave, O'lord! But I warned thee not to trust him. All my teachings rebounded from his head as peas against a wall. There are not sufficient torments for him in the whole hades! For who cannot be an honest man must be in poor measure a rogue; for whom is it more difficultto become an honest man than to be a rogue? But to fall on his benefactor—and a lord so generous. Oh gods.....

Here he remembered however that on the way he represented himself to Ursus as a Christian, and hesitated.

Vinicius continued: "If not for the 'sica' which I Wd

with me he would have killed me."

'I bless that moment in which I advised thee to take at least a knife." But Vinicius turned an inquiring glance on the Greek, and asked:

"What hast thou done to-day?"

"How so? Didn't I tell thee, lord, that I was making vows for thy health?"

"And nothing more?"

"And I was just preparing to visit thee when that good man arrived and told me that thou had summoned me."

"Here is a tablet. Thou wilt go with it to my house, wilt find my freedman and wilt give it to him. It is written on it that I departed for Beneventum. Thou wilt tell Demas thyself that I have done so this morning, summoned by an important letter from Petronius." Here he repeated, with pressure: "I have gone to Beneventum. Dost tjiou understand?"

"Thou hast gone, lord. I bade thee farewell this morning at Porta Capena, and from the time of thy departure such a grief took possession of me that if thy generosity will not soothe it I will wail myself to death, like the unfortunate wife of Tethos through sorrow for Ityl.

Vinicius, though sick and accustomed to the pliancy of the Greek, could not refrain from a smile. He was glad, moreover, that Chilo understood him. so rapidly, conse-

quently he said:

"Therefore, I will add to the writing that thy tears be

wiped away. Give me the lantern."

Chilo, already calmed, rose, and, taking a few steps in the direction of the chimney, took off one of the burning lanterns. But when doing this the hood slipped from his head and the light fell directly on his face. Glaucus started from the bench, and, approaching quickly, stood before him.

"Dost thou not recognize me, Cephas?" he asked.

And in his voice there was something so terrible that a 'shudder ran through all those present. Chilo raised the lantern and dropped it to the earth almost in the same moment; then he bent himself in two and began to moan:

"I am not.... I am not..... Mercy!"

Glaucus turned toward those eating and said:

"That is the man who betrayed and ruined me and my family."

His history was known to all Christians and to Vinieius, too, who did not guess who that Glaucus was for the reason that, fainting periodically from pain during the dressing of his wounds, he did not hear his name.

But for Ursus the words of Glaucus were like lightning flashes in the dark. Recognizing Chilo, he was beside him in an instant, and, seizing his shoulders and bending them back, exclaimed:

"This is the one who persuaded me to kill Glaucus!"

" 'Mercy!" groaned Chilo. "11 will give you.... Lord!" turning his head to Vinieius, 11 save me. I trusted thee. Intercede in my behalf.... Thy letter.... I will deliver it. lord, lord!...."

But Vinieius, who noticed what was happening more indifferently than any of the others—first, because all affairs of the Greek were known to him, and, second, that his heart knew not what mercy was—said:

"Bury him in the garden. Some one else will deliver the

letter."

These words seemed to Chilo to be the final sentence. His bones began to crack in the terrible arms of Ursus, his

eyes were filling with tears from pain.

"0 your God, mercy!" he cried. "I am a Christian! Pax vobiscum! I am a Christian, and if you don't believe me baptize me once more, two times yet, ten times yet! Glaucus, this is a mistake. Allow me to speak- Make me a slave.... Do not kill me! Mercy!..."

And his voice, choked by pain, was growing weaker and weaker, when suddenly the Apostle Peter rose from the table. For a moment his white head was shaking, dropping toward his breast, and his eyes were closed, but he opened

them and said amidst silence:

And the Saviour told us thus: "If thy brother has sinned ayainst thee, rebuke him; and if he would repent—forgive him. And if he sinned seven times a day against thee and would turn seven times to tliee, saying: I regret to theel Pardon him!" Then followed still greater silence.

Glaucus stood for a long time with his face covered in his hands; finally he lowered them and said: "Sephas, may

God forgive thee my wrongs as I forgive them to thee in the name of Christ. And Ursus, freeing the shoulders of the Greek, added immediately: "May the Saviour be merciful to me as I am to thee." Chilo fell to the ground and, leaning on his hands, turned his head like an animal caught in a snare, looking around and waiting wherefrom death might come. He did not believe his eyes nor ears, and did not dare to espect forgiveness. But consciousness returned to him slowly, only his livid lips yet trembled from terror. Meanwhile the Apostle said:

"Depart in peace!"

Chilo rose, but he could not yet speak. Involuntarily he approached the bed of Vinicius as if seeking shelter from him, for he had not yet time to think that he who profited from his services and was still in some measure his accomplice condemned him while those against whom he served pardoned. This thought was to come to him later. At present in his looks were only amazement and incredulity. Although he understood that they forgave him he wished to turn his head as quick as possible from amidst these incomprehensible people whose goodness terrified him as cruelty would. It seemed to him that if he would remain any longer, something unexpected might happen again; so standing over Vinicius he began to speak with a stammering voice, and seizing the tablet which Vinicius handed to him he bowed before the Christians and the sick man and sneaked away, stealing along the very wall, and rushed out through the doors.

In the garden, when darkness surrounded him, fear bristled the hair on his head, for he was sure that Ursus would come behind him and kill him in the night. He would run away with all his mighty but his legs refused to serve him; after a moment they became entirely impotent, for Ursus overtook him. Chilo fell with the face on the ground and began to groan:

"Urban. . . . in Christ's name. ...

But Urban said:

behind the gate so that thou dost not go astray in the darkness, and if thou hast not strength enough I will conduct thee home."

Chilo raised his face.

"What sayest thou? . . . Wilt thou not kill me? . . .

"No! I will not kill thee, and if I seized thee too strongly

and have harmed the bones, pardon me."

"Help me to rise," said the Greek, "Thou wilt not kill me? What? Conduct me to the street—I will go farther alone"

Ursus lifted him from the ground like a feather and placed him on his feet, then he conducted him through the dark passage to the second court from which one passed to the corridor and the street. In the corridor Chilo was again repeating to himself:

"It is all over with me!" and only when they reached the

street he subsided and said:

"Farther I will go alone."

"Peace be with thee!"

"And with thee! and with thee! . . . Let me draw my breath."

And after Ursus left he breathed easier. He touched himself on his waist and hips, as if wishing to convince himself that he was alive, and then moved ahead with a swift pace.

But after he went several dozens of paces he stopped and said:

"But why did they not kill me?" And in spite that he already spoke with Eurycius of the Christian believe, in spite of the talk at the river with Urban, and in spite of everything he heard in Ostrianum, he could not find an answer to this question.

#### CHAPTER III.

Vinicius also could not account for what had happened, and from the bottom of his soul he was almost as much amazed as Chilo., For if these people treated him as they had—instead of revenging themselves on him for his assault, carefully dressed his wound—he ascribed it partly to the teaching they confessed, still more to Lygia, and a little also to his great significance. But their treatment of Chilo simply surpassed his ideas of the human capability of forgiveness. And to him, too, involuntarily came to mind the question: Why didn't thejr kill the Greek? They could have done so unpunished. Ursus would have buried him in the garden or borne him at midnight to the Tiber, which in those times of nightly robberies—committed even by Caesar himself—so often bore up in the mornings human bodies, that nobody investigated where they came from. Besides, according to Vinicius, the Christians were not only able, but had a right to kill Chilo. It is true that the pity was not entirely strange to that world to which the young patrician belonged. The Athenians erected an altar to it, and for a long time opposed the introduction to Athens of struggles of gladiators. It happened that in Rome itself the conquered received pardon, as, for instance, Calicratus, king of the Bretons, who, taken into captivity in the time of Claudius, and provided by him abundantly, lived in the city in freedom. But a revenge for personal wrongs seemed to Vinicius, as to everybody, proper and justified. The neglect of it was altogether opposed to his way of thinking.

It is true that he had also heard in Ostrianum that it behooves to love even enemies, but he considered this, however, as a theory having no significance in life. And now it passed through his mind that Chilo was not killed on account of some holiday or a certain quarter of the moon during which it was unlawful to kill. He heard that there are such days in which it is not allowed to different peoples to even begin war. But why in such a case the Greek was not given into the hands of justice; why did the Apostle say fa :.t if somebody would sin seven times, it behooves to par-don him seven times, and why did Glaucus say to Chilo: "May God pardon thee as I do!" 'And Chilo had done him the most terrible wrong which one man can do another; and Vinicius, at the thought of how he would deal with one jwho, for instance, would kill Lygia, his heart seethed up as boiling water. There were no such torments which he would not have inflicted upon him. But that man has for-given! And Ursus forgave, too-Ursus, who in fact could kill in Rome whom he wished, entirely unpunished, for he needed afterward only to kill the king of the Nemos grove and take his place. Could a gladiator who bore that dignity which one could reach only by killing the previous "king," resist the man whom Croton was not able to resist? There was to all these questions only one answer: That they were

not killing because of a goodness so great that there was not a similar case in the world, and through an unbounded love for man which commanded to forget one's wrongs, happiness or misfortunes and live for others. What reward these people were to get for this, Vinicius heard in O.strianum, but it found no understanding in his mind. He felt, however, that this worldly life, joined with the duty of renouncing every good and riches, for the benefit of others, must be miserable. Therefore, in what he at that moment thought of Christians, besides the greatest amazement, there was pity and a shade of contempt. It seemed to him that they were sheep which, sooner or later, must be eaten by wolves, while his Roman character was not able to bring about an acknowledgement for those who allow themselves to be devoured. One thing, however, struck him, and this was that after Chilo's departure a certain deep joy brightened all the faces.

The Apostle approached Glaucus, and, placing his hands on his head, said: "Christ conquered in thee." Glaucus raised his eyes to heaven, so confident and full of joy, as if

some great, unexpected happiness would come to him.

Vinicius, who could understand only the joy of a fulfilled vengeance, looked at him with opened eyes from fear, as at a madman. He saw, however, and saw not without an inward indignation, when Lygia afterward pressed her lips to the hand of that man, who from appearance looked like a slave, and it seemed to him that the order of the world was changing.

Then Ursus came in and told how he had conducted Chilo to the street, and how he begged him for forgiveness of injuries which he might haved one to his bones, for which the Apostle blessed him, and Crispus declared that this was aday of great victory. Hearing of this victory, Vinicius lost the thread of his thoughts entirely. But when after awhile Lygia gave him another cooling drink, he held her hand and asked:

"Thou, too, hast forgiven me?"

"We are Christians. We are not allowed to hide anger in our hearts."

"Lygia," he then said, "whoever thy God is I will honor

him by a hundred oxen only because he is thine."

But she said: "Thou wilt honor him in thy heart when thou wilt love him."

"Only because he is thine...." he repeated, with a weaker voice. And he closed his eyes, for weakpess had again overpowered him.

Lygia went away, but after awhile returned, and, going close, bent over him to see whether he slept. Vinicius felt that she was near, and, opening his eyes, smiled. She then placed her hand over his face, as if wishing to incline him to slumber. A great sweetness then seized him, but at the same time he felt a greater weakness.

And really it was so. Night came, and with it a stronger fever. For that reason he could not sleep, and his eyes followed Lygia wherever she went. At times, however, he fell into a kind of half-slumber, in which he saw and heard everything that was happening around him, but in which the reality mingled with feverish visions. And so it seemed to him that in some old, deserted cemetery stood a temple in the shape of a tower, in which Lygia was a priestess. He did not turn his eyes fr\$m her, but saw her on the top of the tower with a lute in her hand, with a light shining on her, similar to those priestesses which at nights sang hymns in honor of the moon and which he saw in the Orient. He himself was climbing up steps with the utmost effort to capture her. Behind him crawled Chilo, chattering his teeth from terror and repeating: "Do not do this, lord, for this is a priestess whom He will avenge...." Vinicius did not know who that He was. He understood, however, that he was going to commit a sacrilege, and also felt a certain boundless terror. But when he reached the balustrade surrounding the summit of the tower, the Apostle with his silvery beard suddenly appeared near Lygia and said: "Do not raise thy hand against her, for she belongs to me." And, having said this, he started to walk with her on a path of the inoon's light, as if on the way to heaven, and he, Vinicius, stretching his hands toward them, began to implore them to take him with them.

Here he awakened, regained consciousness, and started to look before him. The light on the long shaft was glowing weaker, but was still sufficiently clear. They were all sitting before the fire warming themselves, for the night was chilly and the room was rather cold. Vinicius saw their breath coming from their mouths in the shape of steam. In the middle sat the Apostle, and at his knees, on a low foot-

stool, Glaucus, Crispus, Mariam, and on the edges at one side Ursus, at the other Nasarius, son of Mariam, a young lad with a charming face and long black hair which reached his shoulders.

Lygia listened with eyes raised to the Apostle, and all the heads were turned to him while he spoke something in a low voice. Vinicius began to look at him with a certain superstitious fear, hardly less than the terror which he experienced in the feverish vision. It came to his mind that he felt the truth in the fever, and that this venerable comer from distant shores really takes Lygia away from him and leads her somewhere to unknown paths. He was sure, too, that the old man speaks of him, or maybe is advising how to separate him from her, for it seemed to Vinicius an impossibility that anybody might speak of something else, and therefore, collecting all his consciousness, he began to listen to Peter's words.

But he was entirely mistaken, the Apostle spoke again of Christ.

"They live only in that name," thought Vinicius.

The old man was relating of Christ's capture. A host of soldiers and servants of the priest were there in order to seize Him. When the Saviour asked them whom they were looking for, they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." But when He told them "I am Him," they fell to the ground and did not dare to raise their hands to Him, and only after a second question seized Him.

Here the Apostle stopped, and stretching his hands to the

fire, said:

1 'The night was cool like this one, but the heart seethed in me, so I drew my sword to defend Him and I cut off the ear of the arch-priest's servant. And I would have defended him more than my own life, if He had not told me: 'Put.' thy sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which my Bather has given me?' Then they seized and tied Him."

Saying this, the Apostle placed his hands to his forehead and was silent, wishing before relating further to conquer the power of recollection. But Ursus, unable to restrain himself, sprang up and poked the light on the staff so that sparks scattered in a golden rain and the flames shot up more briskly, after which he sat down and exclaimed: "Let what would have happened"

But he stopped suddenly for Lygia placed her finger on her lips. He breathed loudly, and it was evident that his soul was disturbed, and though he was always ready to kiss the feet of the Apostle, that one deed he was unable to approve: if, for instance, in his presence somebody would raise his hand against the Saviour, if he was with Him, splinters would fall from the soldiers and from the servants of the priests and from the hirelings. . . . . And tears came to his eyes at the very thought of it, and at the same time from sorrow and spiritual discord, for on the one hand he thought that not only he would himself defend the Saviour, but would call Lygians to his aid; but on the other, that by so doing he would show disobedience to the Saviour and hinder the redemption of the world.

For this reason he could not restrain his tears. After a while, Peter, taking his hands from his forehead, continued to relate, but Vinicius was again seized by a feverish halfslumber. What he heard now mingled with what the Apostle told on the previous night in Ostrianum of that day in which Christ appeared on the shore of the Tyberian Sea. He saw, therefore, a broad sheet of water. On it a fisherman-boat, and in the boat Peter and Lygia. He himself swam with all his might after them, but the pain in his broken arm prevented him from overtaking them. A storm started to hurl waves in his eyes, and he began to sink, calling with an entreating voice for rescue. Lygia then knelt down before the Apostle, and he turned the boat and stretched an oar to him; seizing it Vinicius got to the boat with their assistance and fell in the bottom of it. But afterwards it seemed to him that, rising up, he saw a multitude of people swimming after the boat. The waves covered their heads with foam,, only hands were seen of some of them in the whirl. But Peter saved the drowning, time after time, and took them into the boat, which grew larger as if by a miracle. Soon whole crowds as big as those which were assembled in Ostrianum filled it, and afterwards more. Vinicius wondered how they could find room enough in it, and fear seized him that they would go to the bottom. But Lygia began to pacify him, and pointed to some light on the far distant shore, to which they sailed. Here the dreams of Vinicius again mingled with what he had heard in Ostrianum from the lips of the Apostle, as to how Christ had

once appeared on the lake. So now he saw in that shore-light some figure to which Peter steered. And the nearer they approached it the calmer grew the weather and greater the lightness. The crowds began to sing a sweet hymn, the air was filled with the odor of nard, the water sparkled as a rainbow, it seemed as if from the bottom lilies and roses were looking up, and finally the boat softly struck the sandy beach. Then Lygia took his hand and said. "Come, I will lead thee." And she led him into the lightness.

Vinicius awoke again, but his dreams dispersed slowly, and he did not regain the feeling of consciousness at once. For a time it seemed to him that he was near the lake and that crowds were surrounding him, amidst which, not knowing himself where he was, he began to look for Petronius, and was astonished that he could not find him. The brisk light from the chimney which shone brightly sobered him somewhat. Olive sticks were glowing slowly under the rosy ashes, but the splinters of pine which were freshly thrown there now shot up in a bright flame, and in this light Vinicius saw Lygia sitting not far from his bed.

The sight of her moved him greatly. He remembered that she spent the previous night in Ostrianum and that during the whole day she kept busy with nursing him, and now when all had gone to rest, only she watched at his bed. It was easy to guess that she must be tired, for sitting motionless, her eyes were closed. Vinicius did not know whether she was sleeping or sunk in thought. He looked at her profile, at the drooping eyelashes, at her hands lying on her knees, and in his pagan head the idea began to revolve that besides the beauty of the nude there is a new beauty.

immensely pure, in which dwells a soul.

He could not convince himself to call it Christian, but thinking of Lygia he could not separate her from the teaching she confessed. He understood that if everybody had gone to rest and Lygia alone, whom he had wronged, was watching over him, it was because that religion commanded her to act thus. But that thought impressed him with astonishment, for the religion was disagreeable to him. He would prefer that Lygia acted thus through love of his face, eyes, his statuesque form—in one word, for all these reasons from which more than once snowy Grecian and Roman arms wound

around hia neck. But suddenly lie felt that if she would be like other women he would lack confidence in her. Then he became amazed and did not know himself what was happening within him, for he saw that in him some new feeling» and likings began to arise, which were strange to the world in which he had lived hitherto.-

Meanwhile she opened her eyes and seeing that Vinicius

was looking at her, approached him and said:

1 'I am near thee. And he answered:

"I saw thy soul in a dream."

## CHAPTER IV.

Next day he awoke weak but with a cool head. The fever had left him. It seemed to him that a whisper of a conversation aroused him, but when he opened his eyes, Lygia was not there. Ursus was bending over the chimney raking apart the gray ashes from the burning coals. Then he began to blow, upon the coals. Vinicius, remembering that that man had crushed Croton but yesterday, observed with interest his gigantic back, similar to a back of a Cyclops, and his powerful limbs as strong as columns.

"Thanks to Mercury that he did not wring,my neck"— Rethought. "By Pollus! If other Lygians are similar to him the Danube legions some day, may have a difficult

task.

But aloud he said:

"Slave!"

TJrsus withdrew his head from the chimney and smiling almost friendly, said:

"God give thee, lord, a good day and good health, but I

am a free man not a slave."

Upon Vinicius, who wished to question Ursus about the native country of Lygia, these words produced a certain pleasure, for a conversation with a free man, though common, brought a smaller derogation to his Roman and patrician dignity than a conversation with a slave, which neither the law nor custom recognized as human being.

"So thou art not from the Aulus?" he asked.

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"No, lord, I serve Gallina as I served her mother, but of

my good will."

Here he again hid his head into the chimney in order to blow at the coals, on which he previously threw some wood; then he took it out and said:

"There are no slaves among us."

But Vinicius asked:

"Where is Lygia?"

"She just went out and I am to prepare a breakfast for thee, lord. She watched over thee the whole night."

"Why didst thou not take her place?"

"For she wished me not to do it, and my business is to obey."

Here his eyes grew gloomy, and after a while he added:

" If I would not obey her, tllou, lord, wouldst not live."

"Dost thou regret not having killed me?"

"No, lord, Christ does not allow us to kill."

"And Atacynus? and Croton?"

"I could not do otherwise," muttered Ursus.

And he began to look as if with regret at his hands, which evidently remained pagan, notwithstanding that the soul accepted baptism. Then he put a pot on the shaft, and sitting down in front of the chimney fixed his thought-, ful eyes on the flame.

"That is thy guilt, lord," he said, at last; "why didst

thou raise thy hand against a king's daughter?"

Haughtiness seethed at the first moment in Vinicius that a common man and barbarian dared not only to. address him so familiarly, but blames him. Those extraordinary and improbable things, which appeared to him two nights before, came again. But being weak, and not having at hand his slaves, he abated his anger, especially since the wish to find out particulars about Lygia's life better of him. Therefore calming himself he to question Ursus about the war of the against Vannius and Suevis. Ursus was glad to relate, but could not add much to what Aulus Plaucius told him. Ursus was not in the battle for he accompanied the hostages to the camp of Atelius Hister. He only knew that the Lygians had conquered the Suevis and Jasigis, but their chief and king fell by an arrow of a Jasigi. Immediately afterwards they received news that the Semnonis fired the

forest on tlie frontiers, and they hastily returned to revenge the wrong, and the hostages remained with Atelius, who at first ordered to give them royal honors. Afterwards Lygia's mother died. The Roman commander did not know what to do with the child. Ursus wished to return with it to their country, but that was a perilous way on account of beasts and wild tribes; therefore, when news came that a mission of Lygians was in the camp of Pomponius offering him assistance against Marcomanis, Hister sent them to Pomponius. When they came to him they found out that no ambassadors were there—and in that way they remained in the camp, whence Pomponius brought them to Rome, and after the triumph was accomplished he gave the royal daughter to Pomponia Griecina.

Vinicius, although only-few details were unknown to him in this story, was listening with pleasure, for his exceeding family pride was agreeably tickled that an eye-witness confirmed the royal descent of Lygia. As a king's daughter she could occupy at Caesar's court a position equal to that of the daughters of the noblest families, especially since the nation, whose ruler was her father, never yet waged war against Rome, and although barbarian, could show itself dangerous, for according to the testimony of Atelius Hister himself, the nation possessed an innumerable quantity of warriors. Ursus moreover confirmed that testimony, . for questioned

by Vinicius about Lygia, said:

"We live in the forests, but we have so much land that nobody knows where the end of the forest is, and there are many people there. There are also large towns in the dense forests, in which there are a great many treasures, which the Semnonis, the Marcomanis, the Vandalis and Quadis plunder in other countries and we take from them. But they do not dare to attack us-only when the wind blows from their direction they burn our forests. We are neither afraid of them nor the Roman Caesar.

"The gods give the Romans the supremacy of the world,"

said Vinicius, severely.

"The gods are evil spirits," answered Ursus with simplicity, 'and where there are no Romans there is no suprem-

Here he trimmed the fire, and spoke as if to himself:

"When Caesar took Callina to the court. I though that

she would meet with a wrong. I wanted to go away to the forests and bring Lygians for assistance to the king's daughters. And the Lygians would have moved to the Danube, for they are good people, though pagan. There I would bring them good news. But some day when Callina returns to Pomponia I will bow to her, that she should allow me to go to them, for Christ was born far away and they have not even heard of him. He knew better than I where he ought to be born, but if he came to the world among us in the forests it was certain that we would not torment him to death, but we yrould bring the child up, and care that He would not want for either game, mushrooms, beaver skins nor amber. And what plunder from the Suevis or Marcomanis we would give Him, so that he should have comfort and affluence!"

Speaking thus he placed on the fire the vessel with broth intended for Vinicius, and was silent. Evidently his thoughts were for some time wandering in the Lygian deserts. Finally the liquid began to boil, when he poured

it it into a flat dish, and properly cooling it, said:

"Glaucus advised that thou, lord, shouldst move even that hand which is sound as little as possible, therefore Lygia ordered me to feed you."

Lygia ordered!

To this there was no answer. It did not even come to Vinicius' mind to contradict her will, as if she was Caesar's daughter or a godness, therefore he did not even answer. And Ursus, seating himself near the bed, began to convey the broth into a little cup and pass it to his lips. He was doing this so carefully, with such a happy look in his blue eyes, that Vinicius doubted whether he was the same terrible Titan who yesterday, having crushed Croton, rushed on him like a storm and would have torn him to pieces if it was not for Lygia's pity. The young patrician for the first time in his life began to reflect as to what took place within this low-bred servant and barbarian. Ursus proved to be a nurse as careful as clumsy. The cup was lost in his herculean fingers, so that there remained no place for Vinicius' lips. After a few fruitless efforts the giant became greatly troubled and said:

"Well, it is easier to lead a bison from the toils."

Vinicius was amused by the anxiety of the Lygian, but his remark did not interest him less. He saw at times in circuses the terrible urus brought from northern forests, on which the most valiant bestiarii pursued with fear, and which yielded only to large elephants.

"Hast thou ever tiled to take such brutes by the horns?"

he asked, with amazement.

"Before twenty winters passed over me I was afraid," answered Ursus, "but later I have taken them." And he began to feed Vinicius still clumsier than before.

"I must ask Myriam or Nazarius to help me," he said.

But in the meantime the pale head of Lygia protruded from behind the curtain.

"I will help you now," she said. And after awhile she came Out from the cubi'culum, in which she evidently was preparing to sleep, for she was dressed only in a close tunic, called by the ancients capitium, covering the breast tightly, and her hair was hanging loose. Vinicius, whose heart beat quicker at sight of her, began to reproach her for not having thought of sleep, but she answered merrily:

"11 was about to 60 so, but first I will replace Ursus."

And taking the cup she sat on the edge of the bed and began to feed'Vinicius, who felt humiliated and happy at the same time. When she bent over him the warmth of her body struck him, and her untied hair fell on his breast and he grew pale from the impression, but felt in the confusion and impulse of his passion that that was a head dear and adored above all, in the presence of which the whole world was nothing. At first he desired her for a, concubine, but now he was beginning to love her with his whole soul. Formerly, as genarally in life and in feeling, he was like all people of that time, a blind, regardless egoist, who cared only for himself, but now he began to care for her. Therefore he refused further nourishment, though in looking at her and in her presence he found inexhaustible delight.

"Enough; go to rest, my divine one," fie said.

"Do not call me that," she answered; "it is not best for me to hear it."

She smiled to him, however, and afterward told him that slumber escaped her; that she did not feel tired, and that she would not go to rest until Glaucus returned. He listened to her words as to music, and his heart rose with increasing emotion—increasing gratitude, and he was at a loss as to how to show her this gratitude.

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"Lygia," he said, after a moment of silence, "I did not know thee before. Now I know that I wished to reach thee by a false way, and so I tell thee, return to Pomponia G-reecina, and be assured that from now no one will raise a hand against thee."

But her face became sad. "I would be happy," she answered, "if I could only see her from a distance, but I cannot return to her any more."

"Why not?" asked Vinicius, with astonishment.

"We Christians know through Acte what is happening at the Palatine. Hast thou not heard that Csesar, shortly after my escape and before his departure to Neapolis, summoned Aulus and Pomponia, and, thinking that they helped me, threatened them with his anger? Happily, Aulus could answer him: 'Thou knowest, lord, that never a lie passed my lips, and so I sweat that we did not assist her to escape, and we do not know what happened to her any more than thee.' And Caesar believed this; afterward he forgot. I, by advice of the elders, never wrote my mother of my whereabouts, so that she always can swear confidently that she knows nothing of me. Maybe thou wilt not comprehend this, Vinicius, but we are not allowed to lie, even if life is involved. Such is our religion, to which we wish to conform our hearts; therefore, I have not seen Pomponia from the time I left her house. Rumors have reached her that I am alive and safe."

Here a longing seized her, her eyes filled with tears, but

she calmed herself shortly and said:

"I know that Pomponia, too, yearns for me. We, however, have our consolations which others have not.

"Yes," answered Vinicius, "Your consolation is Christ,

but I don't understand that."

"Look at us; there are no separations for us, no pains, no sufferings, and if they come they turn to joy. Even death itself—which for you is the end of life—is for us only its beginning and a change from worse to better, from calm to calmer-and for all eternity. Consider what must be the religion which commands charity even toward enemies, forbids lying, purifies our souls from anger, and promises inexhaustible happiness after death."

"I heard that in Ostrianum, and I also saw how you treated Chilo and I. and when I think of this it seems to me like a dream, and that I ought not believe either my ears or eyes. But thou answer me another question: Art thou happy?"

'Yes," answered Lygia. " Confessing Christ I cannot

be unhappy."

Vinicius looked at her as if that which she was- saying surpassed the human understanding.

'And thou wouldst not wish to return to Pomponia?"

111 would wish from my whole soul, and I will return if such be the will of God."

"Therefore, I say to thee, return, and I will swear to thee

by my lares that I will not raise my hand to thee."

Lygia mused for a while, and then answered:

"No; I cannot expose my loved ones to danger. Caesar does not love the family of Aulus. If I would return thou knowest how every news is spread through Rome by slaves, and therefore my return would become divulged in the city, and Nero would find that out through his slaves and then-punish Aulus, and at least would take me away from them again."

"Yes," said Vinicius, frowning, "this might happen. He would do so if only to show that his will must be obeyed. It is true that he forgot thee, or did not wish to think of it, supposing that not he, but I, was wronged. But may be,.... taking thee away from Aulus,.... he would give thee to me, and I would return thee to Pomponia."

But she asked, with sadness: "Vinicius, wouldst thou

wish to see me again on the Palatine?"

He set his teeth and answered: "No. Thou art right. I

spoke like a fool. No!"

And suddenly a bottomless abyss appeared before him. He was a patrician; he was a military tribune, a mighty man, but over all the powers of this world to which he belonged stood a madman, whose will nor maliciousness cannot be foreseen. Not to reckon with him, not to fear him, is possible to only such people as the Christians, for whom this whole world, its separation, and even death, is nothing. All others tremiale before him. The dread of the time in which they were living showed itself to Vinicius as a monstrosity. He could not give Lygia back tp'Aulus from fear that the monster might remember her and turn his anger upon her. For the same reason, if he should take her now as his wife, he might expose her, himself, and Aulus. A moment of evil humor sufficed to ruin all. Vinicius felt, for the first time in his life, that either the world must change and regenerate or life will become impossible. He also understood that which only a moment ago was yet dark to him, that in such times the Christians only could be happy. He understood that he himself had complicated life for himself and Lygia, and that there was no escape from this entanglement. Under influence of this grief he

began to speak:
"Dost thou know that thou art happier than I? Thou

art in poverty and in this one room thou hadst thy teaching and thy Christ, but I have only thee, and when I lacked thee I was like a beggar who has no roof over him. Thou art dearer to me than the whole world. I searched for thee, for I could not live without thee. I wanted neither feasts nor sleep. If not for the hope that I would find thee I would throw myself against a sword. But I fear death, for I couldn't look at thee. I tell thee the sincere truth, that I will not be able to live without thee, and I lived till now only in the hope that I would find and see thee. Dost thou remember our conversations at Aulus' house? Once thou did sketch for me a fish on the sand, and I did not understand what this meant. Dost thou remember how we played ball? I loved thee then more than life, and thou began to surmise that I loved thee. ... A ulus came, frightened us with Libitina, and interrupted our conversation. Pomponia when taking leave from Petronius' told him that God is one, almighty and merciful, but it did not come to our minds that your God was Christ. Let Him give thee to me, and I will love Him, though He seems to me a God of slaves, strangers and beggars. Thou sittest near me and thinkest of Him only. Think of me also or I will hate Him. For me thou alone art a goddess. Blessed be thy father and mother, blessed the earth which produced thee. I would wish to embrace thy feet, and pray to thee-render homage, offerings, and adoration-thou thrice divine!' Thou dost not know, thou canst not know, how I love thee.

Speaking thus, he drew his hand across his pallid brow and closed his eyes. His character knew no bounds in anger or love. He spoke excitedly, as a man who, ceasing to 220 OUO VADIS.

control himself, does not desire justice either in words or honor. But he spoke from the depth of his soul, and sincerely. It could be felt that pain, rapture, desires and adoration accumulating in his breast bursted forth at last with an unabstaining stream of words. To Lygia his words seemed blasphemous, but still her heart began to beat as if it wished to tear the tunic enclosing her bosom. She could not withhold her pity for him and his torment. She was touched by the homage with which he spoke to her. She felt herself loved and idolized without bounds: she felt that this young and dangerous man now belongs to her with soul and body as a slave, and this feeling of his humility filled her happiness. Her recollection revived in one moment. He was to her as magnificent and beautiful a pagan god. Vinicius, who in the house of Aulus spoke to her of love and woke from slumber her yet childish heart, the same whose kisses she yet felt on her lips, and from whose embrace Ursus wrested her at the Palatine as if from flame. Only then with rapture and at the same time with pain in his a quiline features, with paled forehead and with entreating expression of his eyes, wounded, broken by love, full of idolatry and humiliation—he appeared to her as she wished to have him then, and whom she would have loved with her whole soul, and therefore dearer than ever.

And suddenly she understood that a 'inoment can come in which his love will seize and capture her as a whirlwind, and feeling this she experienced the same impression he underwent awhile ago/ namely :> that she stands on the edge of an abyss. For this she left the house of Aulus; for this she saved herself by flight'; for this she was hiding herself so long in the miserable parts of the city. Who was that Vinicius? Augustian soldierand courtier of Nero! Moreover, he participated in his profligacy and folly, as was evident by that feast which Lygia could not forget; he alsp went with others to the temple, and made offerings to the abominable gods, in whom may be he did not believe, but nevertheless, rendered them the official homage. Why he pursued her in order to make out of her his slave and mistress, and at the same time to push her into that horrible world of luxury, delight, crime and turpitude which calls down the anger and vengeance of God, she did not know. It is true he seemed changed, but he had just told her himself that if she will think more of

Christ than of him, he will hate Him. It seemed to Lygia that alone the thought of any other love than of Christ is a sin against Him and her religion, so when she saw that other feelings and desires can awaken her whole soul, she was seized by alarm for her own future and own heart.

At that moment of internal discord, Glaueus arrived to tend to the sick man and examine his health. Immediately anger and impatience reflected on the face of Vinicius. He was angry that his conversation with Lygia was interrupted, and when Glaueus began to question him he answered almost with contempt. But he becalmed himself quickly. At last Lygia left the room full of internal trouble and anxiety. Once she offered in a prayer to Christ a hard heart, but really pure as a tear. Now that serenity was troubled. A virulent worm was in the interior of a flower and began to buzz in it. Even sleep, in spite of two sleepless nights, brought no alleviation to her sufferings. She was dreaming that at Ostrianum Nero at the head of a retinue of Augustians, bacchantes, corybantes, and gladiators was trampling crowds of Christians with a chariot wreathed in roses, and Vinicius seizes her in his arms and drew her into the quadriga and pressing her to his bosom, whispers: "Come with us."

## CHAPTER V.

From that time she appeared more rarely in the living room, and seldom approached Vinicius' bed. 'She saw that he followed her with entreating glances; that he waited for every word she uttered as for a favor; that he suffers and dared not to complain so as not to dishearten her towards him, that she alone was health and joy to him, and her heart swelled with compassion. Soon she perceived that the more she tried to avoid him the more she regretted it, and by this the more tender feelings were born in her. Tranquility left her. At times she said to herself that it was her duty to be always near him; first, because the teaching of God commands to pay good for evil, and second, because conversing with him she might gain him for that religion. But immediately her conscience told her that she deceives herself, and that nothing but love and his charm

drew tier to him. In this way she lived in constant discord, which increased every day. At times it seemed to her that a kind of a net surrounded her, but she, wishing to break it entangled herself more and more. She also admitted to herself that to be with him was becoming more necessary to her; his voice was becoming .more agreeable, and that she struggled with her whole strength against the desire to be near his bed. When she approached him and his eyes brightened, her heart overflowed with joy. One day she noticed traces of tears on his eye lashes, and for the first time in her life a thought came to her that she could dry them with kisses. Scared by that thought and full of contempt for herself, she wept through the whole night. But he was as patient as if he had vowed patience to himself. When at moments his eyes flashed with discontent, self-will and anger he repressed these flashes at once, and then he would look at her with uneasiness as if wishing to apologize to her, and she was still more prepossessed by this. She never before had the feeling that she was loved so greatly, and when she thought of it she felt herself guilty and happy at the same time. Vinicius too was evidently changing. In his conversations with Glaucus there was less haughtiness. It often came to his mind that even this poor physician-slave and the foreign woman, Myriam,- who surrounded him with solicitude, and Crispus whom he always saw absorbed in prayer, were anyhow human. He wondered at such thoughts, but still he had them. After a time he took a liking to Ursus and conversed with him for whole days, because be could speak with him of Lygia, and the giant, who was inexhaustable in relating and performing the most simple services, also began to show Vinicius a kind of attachment. Lygia always appeared to Vinicius as a creature belonging to another world a hundred times higher than those who surrounded her; nevertheless he began to observe the common and poor people, a thing which he had never done before in his life. But he could not endure Nazanus, for it seemed to him that the young lad dared to love Lygia. It is true he restrained himself for a long time, but once when he gave the girl two quails which he bought in the market from his own earned money, the descendant of Quirites awoke in Vinicius, in whose sight the vagrant from a strange land was lower than the meanest worm. Hearing Lygia's

thanks, he grew terribly pale and when Nazarius went out to

get water for the birds, he said:

"Lygia, canst thou endure that he should present gifts to thee? Dost thou not know that the Greeks call the people of his nation Jewish dogs?"

"I don't know how the Greeks call them," she answered,

but I know that Nazarius is a Christian and my brother.

Saying this she looked at him with astonishment and regret, for he h.ad already disaccustomed her from similar outbreaks, but he set his teeth to keep from telling her that such a brother of hers he would order to be flogged to death with lashes, or would send him into the country as a compeditus to dig earth in his Sicilian vineyards. He restrained himself, however, choked the anger in himself and said:

<sup>1</sup> Pardon me Lygia. Thou art a royal daughter for me

and an adopted child of Plautius."

And he restrained himself to such degree that when Nazarius appeared in the room again, he promised him when he returned to his villa he would present him with a pair of peacocks or a pair of flamingoes, of which he had a garden full. Lygia understood how much such victories over himself must cost him. But the oftener he gained them the more her heart went to him. But his merit in regard to Nazarius was, however, smaller than she supposed. Vinicius might for awhile be indignant against Nazarius, but could not be jealous of him. Indeed the son of Myriam signified in his eyes not much more than a dog, and besides was still a child, which, if he loved Lygia—then he loved her unconsciously and servily. The young tribune had to carry on greaterly struggles with himself to submit even in silence to the honor with which the name and teachings of Christ were surrounded among these people.

In this regard wonderful things happened in Vinicius. It was in any case the religion which Lygia professed, and for this alone he was ready to acknowledge it Afterward the more his health returned, the more he remembered the whole line of events which occurred from that night in Ostrianum, and the line of conceptions which had passed through his mind from that time, the more he was amazed at the superhuman power of the teaching, which regenerated the human souls to their foundations. He understood that there was something extraordinary in it, something which was not in

the world hitherto, and felt that if it embraced the wholeworld, if it ingrafted on the world its love and its mercy, probably an epoch would come recalling that in which not Yovis, but Saturn had reigned. He did not dare to doubt any longer the supernatural origin of Chist, nor of His resurrection, nor His other miracles. Eye-witnesses who spoke of this were too trustworthy, and abhorred falsehood too much to let him suppose that they were relating things that never happened. Finally, the Roman scepticism allowed disbelief in God, but believed in miracles.

Vinicius stood before a wonderful enigma which he could not solve. From the other side however, this whole teaching seemed so adverse to the existing state of things, so impracticable, and mad beyond any madness that has ever existed. According to him the people in Rome and in the whole world might be bad, but the order of things was good. If, for instance, Caesar would bean honest man, if the senate was not composed of objectionable libertines but of such man as was Traseas, what more could be desired? Roman peace and Roman superiority were a good thing, the division among people proper and just, but meanwhile that religion, according to Vinicius' understanding would have to destroy every order, every superiority, and abolish every distinction. And what would then become of the Roman supremacy and dominion? Could the Romans cease to rule, or acknowledge a whole herd of conquered nations equal to themselves? This found no place in the patricians mind, and besides to him personally, that teaching was contrary to all his ideas, customs character and understanding of life. He could not absolutely imagine how he might exist if he accepted it. He feared and admired it, but his nature simply shrinked at the thought of accepting it. He understood at last that nothing but that teaching separated him from Lygia, and when he thought of this, he hated it with all the powers of his soul.

Still he admitted to himself that it had dressed Lygia in an exceptional, inexpressible beauty which produced in his heart besides love, honor; besides desire, adoration, and has made from Lygia, a creature dear to him beyond everything in the world. And then again to love Christ. And he understood clearly that he would either have to love Him, or hate Him, for he could not remain indifferent.

Meanwhile he was pressed as if by two opposing waves, he hesitated in thoughts, he hesitated in feelings, he did not know how to choose, he bowed his head and expressed silent honor to that incomprehensible God, only because He was Lygia's God.

Lygia saw what was happening in him, how he was humbling himself, how his nature rejected that teaching, and if on one side it grieved her mortally, on the other compassion, pity and gratitude for that silent esteem, which he showed to Christ inclined her heart to him with irrestible force. She recalled Pomponia Grsecina, and Aulus. For Pomponia the source of ceaseless sorrow and never dried tears, was the thought that behind the grave she would not find Aulus. Lygia now began to better understand the bitterness and the pain. She too found a beloved creature, with whom the eternal separation threatened her. At times she deluded - herself, that his soul would open to Christ's verities, but these illusions could not remain. She already knew and understood him too well. Vinicius, a Christian! These two ideas she could not conceive in her inexperienced mind. If a considerate and prudent man like Aulus had not become one under the influence of wise and perfect Pomponia, how could Vinicius become one? There was no answer to this, or father there existed only one: that for him there was neither hope nor salvation. But Lygia saw with fear that this sentence of ruin which hung around him, instead of estranging her from him, makes him still dearer to her. At times she was seized by willingness to speak with him sincerely of his dark future, but when once seating herself near him, she told him that beyond the Christian teaching there was no life, he, being already stronger, lifted himself on his sound arm and suddenly placed his head on her knees saying:
11 Thou art life. "And then breath failed in her breast, con-

11 Thou art life. "And then breath failed in her breast, conciousness left her, a kind of a shudder of delight rushed through her from head to foot. Seizing his temples with her hands she tried to raise him, but by so doing she bent herself over him, so that her lips touched his hair and for a moment they were both overcome with passion and with love

that drew them to one another.

At last Lygia rose and ran away. There was fire in her veins and dizziness in her head. But that was a drop which finally overflowed the already full cup. Vinicius did not

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surmise how dear he will have to pay for this happy moment, but Lygia understood that now she herself needed rescue. She spent a sleepless night, in tears and in prayer, with the feeling that she was unworthy to pray and that she would not be heard. Next morning she went from the cubiculum early, and, calling Crispus to the summer garden, which was covered by ivy and withered bindweed, opened her whole soul to him, entreating him at the same time to allow her to leave Myriam's house, for she trusted herself no more and was not able to overcome in her heart the love for Vinicius.

Crispus, who was an old man, severe and absorbed in constant prayer, agreed to the intention of leaving Myriam's house, but found no words of forgiveness for the sinful Lygia His heart swelled with indignation at the very thought that Lygia—whom he has guarded from the moment of her flight, whom he loved, whom he strengthened in faith and at whom he has hitherto looked as at a white lily, grown up in the Christian teaching and untainted by any earthly breath—could find in her soul place for any other than heavenly love. He believed hitherto that nowhere in the world beat a purer heart for the glory of Christ. He wished to offer her to Him as a pearl, as a jewel and precious work of his own hands; therefore the disappointment filled him with amazement and bitterness.

"Go and implore God to forgive thee the offense," he said, gloomily. "Flee before the evil spirit which entangled thee will bring thee to complete downfall and before thou disavowest the Saviour. God died for thee on the cross to redeem thy soul with His own blood, but thou preferred to love him who wished to 'make out of thee his concubine. God saved thee from his hands by a miracle, but thou hast opened thy heart to impure desire, and thou didst fall in love with a son of darkness. Who is he? Friend and servant of Antichrist, participant in profligacy and crime. Where will he lead thee if not to that abyss and to that Sodoma in which he lives himself and which God will annihilate with the flame of His anger? And I tell thee: Would that thou might die; would that the walls of this house fall on thy head rather than have that man creep into thy bosom and beslime it with the poison of wickedness."

And he was getting more and more excited, for Lygia's

guilt filled him not only with anger, but also with abhorrence and contempt for human nature in general, and especially for females, which even the Christian teaching did not save from Eve's weakness. It was nothing to him that the maiden remained yet pure—that she wished to flee from that love, and that she confessed it with regret and contrition. Crispus wished to transform her into an angel and elevate her to "the heights on which only love for Christ existed, but she fell in love with an Augustinian! The very thought of it filled his heart with awe, strengthened by the feeling of disappointment and disillusion., No, he could not forgive her!: Words of awe burned his lips like gleaming coals; he struggled with himself so as not to utter them, but shook his gaunt hands over the terrified girl.

Lygia felt herself guilty, but not to that degree. She even. believed that the withdrawal from Myriam's house' would be her victory and appeasing of her guilt. Crispus rubbed her into the dust; he showed her the entire misery of her soul, which she had not suspected hitherto. She did not even suppose that the old presbyter, who, from the moment of her flight from Palatine, was for her as a father, would not show some pity—that he would console her and

give her courage and will power.

"To God I offer my disappointment and pain," he said.
"But thou hast deceived the Saviour, for thou hast descended as if on a swamp, the exhalation of which has poisoned thy soul. Thou couldst offer it to Christ as a costly vessel and tell Him: 'Fill it, O Lord, with grace!' and thou hast preferred to offer it to the servant of the evil soul. May God pardon

thee and may He have mercy upon thee."

And suddenly he ceased to speak, for he saw that they were not alone. Through the withered bindwood and ivy, as green in winter as in summer, he perceived two men, one of whom was the Apostle Peter. The other one he was unable to at once recognize, for a cloak of heavy woolen web, called cilicium, covered a part of his face. It seemed for a while to Crispus that this was Chilo.

But they, hearing the raised voice of Crispus, entered the summer arbor and seated themselves on a Stone bench. Peter's companion then uncovered his emaciated face and bald skull, covered on the sides with curly hair, with reddened eyelids and a crooked nose—ugly but at the same time inspired, in

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which Crispus recognized the features of Paul of Tarsus. But Lygia, falling to her knees, embraced the feet of Peter as if in despair, and hiding her head in his gown, remained so in silence. But Peter said:

1 'Peace to your souls!" And seeing the child at his feet asked what had happened. Chispus then began to relate everything that Lygia had confessed, her simple love, her desire of flight from Myriam's house, and his regret that the soul which he desired to offer to Christ pure as a tear was soiled by an earthly feeling for the participant of all the crimes in which the pagan world had sunk, and which called for God's vengence.

Lygia during his words, embraced the feet of the Apostle Stronger and stronger, as if wishing to seek refuge from them, and to beg even a little mercy. But the Apostle listening till the end, bent down and placed his decrepit hand on her head, after which he raised his eyes to the old presbyter and said: "Crispus, didst thou not hear that our beloved Master was in Cana, at a marriage feast, and blessed the love between the woman and man?"

Crispus's hands dropped and he looked with amazement on the speaker, unable to utter a word.

After being silent for a moment the Apostle asked again: 'Crispus, dost thou think that Christ, who permitted Maria of Magdala to lay at His feet, and who pardoned the public sinner, would turn away from this child, pure as field-lilies?"

Lygia clung with sobs still stronger to Peter's feet, understanding that she did not seek shelter in vain. The Apostle lifting her tear-stained face said: "Until the eyes of whom thou lovest will open to the light of truth, avoid him, lest he might bring thee to sin, but pray for him and know that there is' no guilt in thy love. And since thou wishest to guard against tempation, therefore that merit will be accounted to thee. Do not grieve and do not weep, for I tell thee, that the grace of the Saviour did not leave thee, and that thy prayers will be heard; after sorrow will begin days of joy."

Saying this he placed both hands on her hair, and raising his eyes to heaven blessed her. From his face shone supe^natural goodness. But the penitent Crispus began to justify himself with humility: "I have sinned against mercy," he said, but I presumed that, admitting to her heart an earthly

love, she denied Christ."

But Peter answered: "Thrice have I denied Him, and still he forgave me, and commanded me to feed His sheep." "And because," concluded Crispus, "Vinicius is an Augustian.

"Christ has crumbled harder hearts," answered Peter. To this, Paul of Tarsus, who was hitherto silent, placed his

finger to his breast and pointing at himself said:

• "I am he who persecuted and caused the death of Christ's servants. During the stoning of Stephen I guarded the garments of those who stoned him. I wished to root out the truth in every part of the inhabited earth, and yet the Lord destined me to announce it all over the world. And I did announce it in Judea, in Greece, on islands, and in this godless city, where I, for the first time, lived in it as a prisoner. And now, when Peter, my superior, summons me I will enter this house to bend this haughty head to Christ's feet and, sow a seed in that stony soil which the Lord will make fruitful so that it shall bring an abundant harvest." And herose.

To Crispus that small, bowed man seemed in that moment what he really was, a giant who will stir the world from its foundation and will conquer nations and lands.

## CHAPTER VI.

Petronius to Vinicius :-

' 'Have pity, carissime. Do not imitate in thy letterseither the Lacedemonians nor Julius Ceesar. If thou couldst, like Caesar, write 'Veni, vidi, vici,' I might understand the laconism. But thy letter means definitively, veni, vidi,fugi. Since such a conclusion of the affair is directly contrary to thy nature, since thou was wounded, and, finally, as uncommon things happened to thee, thy letter needs explanation. I did not believe my eyes when I read that that Lygian choked Croton as a Caledonian dog chokes a wolf in the defiles of Hibernia. That man is worth as much gold as he himself weighs, and it would depend solely on him to become a favorite of Caesar. When I return to the city I must make his acquaintance, and will have a bronze statue of him cast for myself. The Copperbeard will burst from curiosity-

when I tell him this is cast from nature. Real athletic bodies are getting rarer and rarer in Italy, in Greece and the Orient. The Germans, though large, have muscles covered with fat. and more bulk than strength. Find out from the Lygian whether he is an exception, or if in his country there are men like him. It will happen that you or me will have to officially organize the games. It then would be well to know where to look for the best bodies. But, praise to the gods of Orient and Occident, that thou hast come out alive from such hands. Thou hast escaped because thou art a patrician and a consul's son. But everything which met thee amazes me in tLe highest degree. That cemetery in which thou wert among Christians, they themselves and their treatment of thee, and the consequent flight of Lygia, and finally the peculiar Uneasiness which thy short letter breathes. Explain to me for I do not understand many things, and if thou wishest the truth, I will say openly that I do not understand either Christians, Lygia nor thee. And do not wonder that I, whom very few things of interest escape in the world, question thee so eagerly. I have contributed to all this which happened; therefore it is partly my affair. Write quickly for I cannot exactly foresee when we will meet again. The plans of the Copperbeard change like spring breezes. Here in Beneventum, he has desired to go straight to Greece, and not return to Rome. Tygellinus, however, advises him that he should return, even for a short time, for the people yearning for his presence, may revolt. Therefore I do not know how it will be. If we decide on Achiea we may want to go to Egypt. I would strongly insist that thou shouldst come here, for I think that in thy state of mind the travel and our diversions would be medicine to thee, but thou might not find us. Consider, however, whether in that case thou wouldst not prefer to repose on thy lands in Sicily than to stay in Rome. Write me fully about thee, and farewell. I add no wishes this time except for health, for, by Pallus, I do not know -what to wish thee."

Vinicius, on receiving this letter, at first did not feel any desire to reply. He had a feeling that it was not worthy of an answer. He was seized by discouragement and the feeling of futility of life, Besides, it seemed to him that Petronius would not in any case understand him, and that something

had happened which had parted them. He would not come to an understanding with himself. Returning from Trans-Tiber to his delightful insula at Carinae he was feeble and exhausted, and during the first days he experienced certain satisfaction in rest, comfort and affluence. But this satisfaction was short. Soon he felt that to live in vacuity, which hitherto had instituted for him interest in life, either did not exist for him at all, or had shrunk to scarcely visible dimensions. He had a feeling as if those ties in his soul, which had hitherto connected him with life had been cut, and no new ones were possible.

At the thought that he could go to Beneventum, afterwards to Achsea, and to plunge into a life of pleasure and wild fancies, he experienced a feeling of repulsiveness. What, is the use? What can I gain from it? These were the first questions which passed through his mind. And also for the first time in life he thought of the conversation of Petronius, his wit, his brilliancy, his quaint definition of thought and

apt words, for every idea might annoy him at present.

On the other hand, solitude began to weary him. All. friends were staying with Cmsar in Beneventum, so he had to remain at home alone with a head full of thoughts, and a heart full of feelings, of which he knew not how to account. He had moments in which he believed that if he could converse with anyone about the things which took place within him, then perhaps he would be able to grasp it, put it in order and understand it better. Under the influence of that hope, after a few days of hesitation, he determined to answer Petronius, though he was not sure whether he would send him that response which he wrote in the following words:

"Thou wishest that I write more extensively—then I will; whether I will be able to do it more clearly I know not, for even I don't know how to loosen many knots. I wrote thee, of my stay among Christians, of their treatment to enemies, to whom (they had the right to count me and Chilo, finally of the kindness with which I was cared for, and of the disappearance of Lygia. No, my dear: they did not spare me because lam a consul's son. Such considerations, do not exist among them, for they pardoned even Chilo, although I'had myself encouraged them to bury him in the garden. They are people whom the world has not seen hith-

erto, and a teaching of which the world never heard till now. I cannot tell thee anything else, and whoever wishes to measure them with our measure fails. Instead I will tell thee, that if I would lay with a broken arm in my own house, if I was nursed by my own people or even my family, probably I would have received greater kindness, but I would not have received half of that comfort, which I received among them.

1 'Know also that Lygia is like the others. If she was my sister or my spouse, she could not have nursed me more carefully. More than once my heart was filled, for I thought that only love can inspire such a tenderness. More than once I read it in her face and glances, and then wilt thou believe that among these common people, in a poor room, which was at the same time a kitchen, and triclinium for them?

'11 felt happier than ever before. No, I was not indifferent to her, and even to-day it seems to me an impossibility to think otherwise. Still that same Lygia left Myriain's house secretly for me. I sit now for whole days with my head in my hands and think, Why did she do it? Did I write thee that I myself have offered to return her to Aulus? It is true she answered me that this is impossible, considering that Aulus'went to Sicily, and considering the news which circulates among slaves from house to house and reaches the Palatine. Cæsar might take her away again from Aulus. True, she knows however, that I will no longer persecute her; that I told her I had forsaken the way of violence, and being unable to cease loving her I will have her enter my house through wreathed doors, and will seat her on a sacred skin by the fireplace. And still she ran away. Why? Nothing threatens her now If she did not love me she could reject me. A day before I made the acquaintance of a curious man, a certain Paul of Tarsus, who spoke with me of Christ and His teaching, spoke so impressively that it seemed to me that every one of his words involuntarily turned all the foundations of our world into ashes. That same man visited me after her flight and told me: 'When God will open thy eyes to the light, and will take the cataract from them as He took it from mine, then thou wilt feel that she acted rightly, and then perhaps thou wilt find her. ' And now I break my head over these words as if I would hear thé mouth of Pythia, in Delphi. At moments it seem?

to me that I already understand something. They, loving people, are enemies of our life, of our gods and our crimes, and so she ran away from me as from a man who belongs to that world, and with whom she would have to share the life, believed by the Christians to be culpable. Thou wilt say that, though she could reject me, she needed not to withdraw. But if she loves me? At the very thought of this I wish to send slaves into all the back streets of Rome and command them to shout throughout the houses,

Return, Lygia 1' But I cannot understand why she has done this. I would not have forbidden her to believe in her Christ, and myself would erect him an altar in the atruim. What could one god more harm me, and why shouldn't I believe in Him? I, who do not believe very much in the old ones. I know with all certainty that the Christians never lie, and yet they say that He rose from the dead. But a man couldn't have done that. That Paul of Tarsus, who is a Roman citizen, but who, as a Jew, knows old Hebrew books, told me that the coming of Christ was predicted by prophets for thousands of years. All these are wonderful things, but does not wonderfulness surround us on every side? That Paul declared there are not many gods, but one, seems to me reasonable. It is probable that Seneca was of such an opinion, and before him there were many others.

" Christ let himself be crucified and resurrected for the salvation of the world. All that is entirely certain, therefore I do not see any reason why I should persist in the contrary opinion, or why should I not erect Him an altar, if I would be ready to erect one, for instance, to Serapis? It would not even be difficult to renounce other gods, for no rational mind believes in them. But it seems that all this does not suffice the Christians. It is not enough to honor Christ, but it is necessary to live according to His teaching, and His alone. Thou stand as if on the shore of a sea which they order thee to cross on foot. If I would promise it to them they would feel that it was an empty sound of words, in my mouth. Paul told me this openly. Thou knowest how I love Lygia and knowest that there is nothing which I would not do for her. I could not, however, even at her wish, raise on my shoulders Soracte or Vesuvius or place Thrasymene or change my eyes from black to blue, like those of the Lygians. If she desired, I would want to, but

this is not in my power. I am not a philosopher, nut also not so stupid as I have, perhaps, seemed to thee. Now», I will tell thee this, I do not know how the Christians advise themselves to live, but I know that where their teaching begins there the Roman supremacy ends, Rome ends, the life ends, the difference between the conquered and conqueror, between rich and poor, between lord and slave ends, office ends, Caesar ends, the law and all the order of the world ends, and instead of all this comes Christ and a certain mercy which did not exist hitherto, and .a kindness contrary to our Roman instincts. It is true I care more for Lygia than for all Rome and its supremacy, and rather may the whole world fall if I can only have her in my home. But this is another affair. For the Christians, it is not enough to agree in words, it is necessary to feel that it is good, and have nothing else in the soul. But I, the gods are my witnesses, cannot. Dost thou understand what that means? It is something in my nature which flinches at that teaching. and even if my lips would promise it and I Would conform myself to its precepts my mind and soul would tell me that I was doing so out of love for Lygia, and that if not for her there would be in the world nothing more repulsive to me. And it is a wonderful thing that such a man as Paul of Tarsus understands this, and also, notwithstanding all his simplicity and low extraction, that old theurgus, the greatest one of them all, Peter, who was Christ's pupil, understands it also. And dost thou know what they are doing? They are praying for me and beg for me something which they call grace, but nothing descends on me except disgust and greater yearning for Lygia. I have written thee that she went away secretly, but she left me a cross which she herself had tied together from twigs of box-tree. Awakening I found it near my bed. I have it now in the lararium, and I cannot account why I approach it as if it was something divine—that iSj with reverence and fear. I love it, for her hands tied it, and hate it for it separates us. Sometimes it / seems to me that in all this weirdness there are some charms, and that the theurgus, Peter, though he declares himself to " be a common fisherman, is greater than even Apollonius.

1. Thou writest that disquiet and sadness are visible in my previous letter. There must be sadness, for I have lost her again, and therefore disquiet, that something changed in me.

I tell thee sincerely that there is nothing more repulsive to my nature than that teaching, and nevertheless from the time I came in contact with it, I cannot recognize my own. self.

Circe changed human bodies by teaching them, and to me my soul has been changed. Only Lygia alone could do it, or rather Lygia through that wonderful teaching she confesses. When I returned from them, nobody expected me. It was supposed that I was in Beneventum, and that I would not return soon, and so I found disorder at home, drunken slaves and a feast which they were giving in my triclinium. They expected death rather than me, and would have been less terrified by it. Thou knowest with what a strong hand I keep my home, so all the slaves fell on their knees, and some of them fainted from fear. And dost thou know how I acted? At the first moment I wanted to call for rods and hot irons, but immediately afterwards a kind of shame seized me, and wilt thou believe? a certain pity for those wretches; among them there are old slave whom my grandfather, M. Vinicius, brought from the Rhine at the time of Augustus. I closed myself in the library and there came stranger thoughts to my mind, namely: that after what I heard and saw among the Christians, it does not become me to behave with the slaves as I had hitherto, and that they are also-

' For a few days they were going around in deathly terror thinking that I postponed, in order to invent more cruel punishment. I was not punishing and did not punish, for could not! Summoning them the third day, I said: 'I pardon you, but strive with a diligent service to correct your faults!'

'To this they fell on their knees, shedding tears, stretching forth their hands with groans, and called me loved one and father, and I, with shame I tell thee this, was also moved. It seemed to me that in that moment, I saw the sweet face of Lygia and her eyes filled with tears, thanking me for this. And, proh pudor! I felt that my lids were-moistened.

"Dost thou know what I will confess to thee? It is that I do not know what course to take without her, that I find myself ill all alone, that I am simply unhappy, and that my sadness is greater than thou supposest. ..But as to my slaves one thing arrested my attention. The pardon they

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received did not make them bold, did not loosen the discipline, but never had fear stirred them up to such a degree of obedience as gratitude has. They not only serve, but they seem to emulate with one another to divine my thoughts. I mention this to thee, because a day before leaving the Christians I told Paul that the world would be divided in consequence of his teaching, as a barrel without hoops, and he answered: 'The love is a stronger hoop than terror;' and now I see that in certain cases that opinion may be right. have verified it also in reference to clients, who learning of my return flocked to greet me. Thou knowest that I was never too miserly towards them, but my father treated them through principle proudly, and taught them the same way. But-now, when I saw their shabby mantles and their famished faces I felt compassion. I ordered food to be given them, and besides I spoke with them; called some by name, asked some about their wives and children, and again saw tears in their eyes, and moreover it seemed to me that Lygia saw this, and she was rejoiced and praised me. Is my mind beginning to wander? Is the love confusing my senses? I do not know, but this I know, that I have always a feeling that she is looking at me from a distance, and I fear to do something which might sadden or offend her. Yes Caius! they have changed my soul, and at times I feel better, but, again at times I am tormented with that thought, for I fear that my bravery and former energy are gone, and perhaps I am unfit already, not only for judgment and feasts but even for war. These are undisputed enchantments, and I am changed to such a degree, that I will also tell you what came to my mind, when I was laying sick in bed: that if Lygia were similar to Nigidia, to Poppaea, to Crispinilla, and to our other divorced women, if she was equally vile, equally merciless, and equally easy as they, I could not love her as I do. But when I love her for what is separating us, thou, wilt divine what chaos is taking place in my soul, in what darkness I live, how I do not see before me certain roads, and I know not what to do. If my life can be compared to a spring, then in my spring, instead of water flows disturbance. live with the hope that perhaps I will see her, and it sometimes seems to me that she must surely come. But what will happen to me in a year or two I do not know, and cannot guess. I will not depart from Rome. I would not be

able to stand the company of Augustians, and besides the alleviation in my sadness and disquiet, is the thought that I am near Lygia, and that through Giaucus, the physician, who promised to visit me, or through Paul of Tarsus., I may learn something about her. No! I would not leave Rome, even if you were to offer me the management of Egypt.

'Know also, that I ordered a sculptor to make a tombstone' for Gulo, whom I killed in anger. It came to my mind that he had carried me in his arms and teached me how to put an arrow on a bow. I do not know why a recollection of him rose in me now, similar to sorrow and reproach. If what I write will astonish thee, I will reply that it astonishes me

not less, but I write thee the pure truth, farewell."

## CHAPTER VII.

To this letter Vinicius received no reply. Petronius evidently expected that Ceesar would order his return to Rome any day. And in fact, news of it spread throughout the city and created great rejoicing in the hearts of the mob, languishing for games and a distribution of grain and oil, of which great stores were accumulated in Ostia. Helius, Nero's freedman, at last announced the return in the Senate. But Nero, embarking with the court on vessels at the cape of Nizenum, was returning slowly, entering coast towns for rest or performances in the theaters. In Ninturnee, where he again sang publicly, he stayed a dozen or more days, and even thought of returning to Neapolis and waiting there for the arrival of spring, which was earlier than usual and warm.

During all that time Vinicius lived closed up in his house-with the thought of Lygia and all these new things which occupied his soul and brought to him strange understandings and feelings. He saw from time to time Giaucus, the; physician, whose every visit filled him with joy, for he could converse with him about Lygia. It is true Giaucus knew not where she found refuge, but he assured Vinicius that theelders surrounded her with tender care. Once, too, touched, by Vinicius' sadness, he told him that Peter, the Apostle, blamed Crispus for reproaching Lygia for her earthly love..

The young patrician hearing this, grew pale from emotion. It seemed to him that he was not indifferent to Lygia, but equally often befell into helplessness and uncertainty; but now, for the first time, he heard a confirmation from strange lips, and besides, Christian lips. In the first moment of egratitude he wished to hurry to Peter, but learning that he was out of town and that he was teaching in the neighborhood, he conjured Glaucus to lead him there, promising to endow the poor of the community. It also seemed to him that if Lygia loved him, then by this alone all obstacles were

set aside, for he was ready at any moment to honor Christ. But Glaucus, though he persuaded him strongly to receive 'baptism, dared not assure him whether he would gain Lygia by this at once, and told him that it was necessary to demand baptism for his own good and out of love for Christ, but not for other objects. "One must also have a Christian soul." he told him, and jVinicius, though every hindrance excited him, already began to understand that Glaucus, as a Chris-

tian, said what he ought to say.

He often wished to see Paul of Tarsus, whose words had -astonished and disturbed him. He arranged in his mind proofs with which he would overcome his teaching. He resisted him in his thoughts; however, he wished to see and hear him. But Paul had gone to Aricia, and when, the visits of Glaucus became rarer and rarer, Vinicius was surrounded with solitude. Then he began again to run through the back streets adjoining the Subura and the narrow streets of the Trans-Tiber in the hope that he would see Lygia, even from a distance, but when this hope deceived him weariness

•and impatience began to rise in his heart.

At last it seemed to him that he was a fool, that he occupied his mind unnecessarily with things which brought him sadness, and that he ought to take from life what was possible. He resolved to forget about Lygia, or at least seek delight and enjoyment aside from her. He felt, however, that this was the last trial; therefore, he threw himself into the whirlpool of life with all the blind energy and vehemence peculiar to him. The life itself seemed to encourage him. The torpid city, depopulated by winter, began to enliven with the hope of the near arrival of Caesar. A solemn reception was prepared for him. Meanwhile spring came, the snows on the summits of the Alban Mountains van-

ished under the breath of African windsgrass-plots werecovered with violets. The Fora and the Mars Field swarmed, with people warmed by a brighter and hotter sun. On the-Appian Way, which was the usual place of drives outside of the city, a great stir of richly ornamented chariots reigned.. Excursions to the Alban Mountains were beginning.. Young women, under the pretense of honoring Juno in Lanuvium, or Diana in Aricia, slipped out of their houses to seek impressions, society, meetings and delights beyond the city. Here Vinicius que day saw amidst the magnificient chariots the splendid carriage of Chrysothemis, prec'eded by two Molossians and surrounded by a whole company of young men. and old senators, whose duty detained them in the city... Chrysothemis driving four Corsican ponies, scattered smiles promiscuously and gayly cracked her golden whip. Seeing: Vinicius, she stopped the horses and took him into the carriage, and afterwards to a feast at her home which lasted. during the whole night. Vinicius got so drunk at the feast that he did not remember when he was brought home: he recollected however, that when Chrysothemis asked him about. Lygia, he was so offended, that being already drunk, he poured a goblet of Falernian wine on her head. But a daylater, Chrysothemis, evidently forgetting the insult, visited him in his house and took him again to the Appian Way, after which she attended a supper at his house, at which she confessed that not only Petronius, but even his lute-player had! wearied her for some time past, and that her heart was free. They appeared together for a week, but the intercourse didi not promise to last long. Though after the incident with, the Falernian wine, the name of Lygia was never mentioned, Vinicius could not free himself from the thought of her. He always had the feeling that her eyes were looking at him, and that feeling' impressed him as if with fear. He worried himself, not being able to get rid of either the thought that he saddened Lygia, nor the regret which that thought roused, in him. After the first scene of jealousy which Chrysothemis made to him on account of two Syrian girls which he had. bought, he sent her away in a brutal fashion. He did not, however, cease to plunge in delight and dissolution; on thecontrary, he was doing it as if to spite Lygia, but at last he saw that the thought of her did not leave him even for an. instant, that she was the cause of his evil as well as good.

deeds, and that rib thing in the world occupied his mind except her. Disgust and weariness overcame him. Delight had grown loathsome to him and left only reproaches. It Iseemed to him that he was a villain, and that last feeling filled him with ineasureless amazement, for formerly he believed as good, everything which complied with his wishes. Finally he lost freedom, self-confidence, and fell in a perfect torpidness, from which even the news of Caesar's return could not rouse him. Nothing now concerned him, and he did not even visit Petronius, till the latter sent him an invitation and his own letter.

On seeing him, though joyfully greeted, he answered his questions unwillingly. But finally his feelings and thoughts, repressed for a long time, burst forth. He related, with all the details of history, the researches for Lygia and his sojourn among the Christians; all that he saw and heard there; all that passed through his mind and heart, and finally began to complain that he fell into a chaos in which he lost tranquility' and the gift of distinguishing and judging things. Nothing allures him; nothing pleases him; he did not know what to do nor how to act. He was ready to honor Christ and persecute Him; he understood the sublimity of His teachings, and at the same time felt an unconquerable repugnance to it. He understood that even if he would possess Lygia he alone would not possess her, for he would have to share her with Christ. Finally, that in the midst of life die was not living at all. Without a hope, without a morrow, •without • a belief in happiness, and surrounded by darkness from which he seeks gropingly an exit and cannot find it.

Petronius, during his narration, looked at his changed face, at his hands which, while speaking, he stretched forth curiously as if really seeking a way in the darkness, and pondered deeply. Suddenly he arose, and approaching Vinicius,

began to run his hand through his hair:

"Dost thou know," he asked, "that thou hast several gray hairs on thy temple?"

"It may be," answered Vinicius. 'I should not wonder if all my hair would soon be white."

Silence followed. Petronius was a sensible man, and more than once he had meditated on life and the human soul But in general, life in the society in which they both lived could be happy or unhappy externally, but internally it was

quiet. Equally as a thunderbolt or earthquake could overthrow a temple, so unhappiness might destroy life. In itself, however, it consisted of simple and, harmonious lines, free from any entanglement. But there was something else in the words of Vinicius, and Petronius for the first time stood in the presence of a line of spiritual knots which no one had hitherto disentangled. With all his cunning he could not answer the questions addressed to him, so finally, after a long silence, he said:

'These are probably enchantments."

"I have also thought so," answered Vinicius. "More than once it seemed to me that we were both enchanted."

"And if thou," said Petronious, "would go, for instance, to the priests of Serapis. Doubtless among them, as generally among priests, there are many impostors, but there are also those who have gone deep into wonderful secrets."

But he spoke without belief and with an uncertain voice, for he felt himself how this advice might seem vain, and

even ridiculous.

Vinicius rubbed his forehead and spoke:

"
Enchantments!.... I saw wizards who used subterranean and unknown powers for profit. I also saw those who used them to harm their enemies. But the Christians live in poverty, forgive their enemies, proclaim humility, virtue and mercy. Therefore what can they profit from enchantments and why should they use them?"

Petronius was getting angry that his intellect was able to find reply to nothing. Not wishing, however, to, acknow-

ledge this, he replied:

"That is a new sect. And after a while he said:

1 'By the divine dweller in Paphian groves, how all this, spoils life I Thou admirest the goodness and virtue of these people, and I tell thee that they are bad, for they are enemies of life, like sickness and death itself We have enough troubles, therefore we do not need. Christians. Just count them: Sickness, Cees'ar, Tygellinus, Caesar's verses, shoemakers who govern the descendants of ancient Quirites, freedmen who sit in the Senate. By Castor I enough of it. This is a ruinous and abominable sect! Didst thou try to shake off these afflictions and use a little life?"

"I tried," answered Vinicius; to this Petronius laughed

and-said:

". Ah, traitor! news spread quickly among the slaves: thou

hast seduced Chrysothemis from me 1"

Vinicius shook his hand in disgust. "In any case I thank thee, " said Petronius. "11 will send her a pair of shoes embroidered with pearls; in my love-language, this means as much as—G-o away. I owe thee a double gratitude: first, because thou didst not accept Eunice; second, that thou hast freed me from Chrysothemis. Listen to me: Thou seest before thee a man who was rising early, bathed, feasted, possessed Chrysothemis, was writing satires, and even sometimes interwove prose with verses, but who was wearied as Caesar, and often was unable to shake off gloomy thoughts. And knowest thou why that was so? Because I sought from afar, that which was near.

'A beautiful woman is always worth her weight in gold, but a beautiful women who loves besides, is priceless. Thou wilt not buy her for all the treasures of Verres. Now I say to myself as follows: I fill life with happiness, as a goblet with the primest wine the earth produces, and I drink till my hand becomes benumed and my lips grow pale. What will come later, I care not, and this is my newest philosophy."

"I confessed it. always, there is nothing new in it!" "It has substance which was formelly lacking."

Saving this he called Eunice, who entered, dressed in white drapery, with golden hair; now no more the former slave, but as a goddess of love and happiness. And he opened his arms, saying: "Come!" She ran up to him and sitting on his lap, threw her arms around his neck and placed her head on his breast. Vinicius saw her cheeks grow crimson, and her eyes close in mist. Together they formed a wonderful group of love and happiness. Petronius reached his hand to a flat vase standing on the table near by, and taking from it a whole handful of violets began to strew them on the head, breast and bosom of Eunice,, after which he pushed down the tunic from her shoulders, and said:

" Happy is the one who like me found love closed in such a form. At times it seems to me, that we are two divinities. Look thyself: Did Praxyteles, or Miron, or Skopas, or Lizias,

-ever create more marvelous lines?

"Does similar marble exist in Paros or Pentelicon, warm, rosy and loving? There are people who kiss off the edges of vases, but I prefer to seek delight where it may be found in reality."

Saying this he began to pass his lips along her shoulders and neck, and she was seized by a throbbing and her eyes closed and again opened with an expression of inexpressible delight. Petronius, after a while, raised his quaint head and addressing Vinicius, said:

"And now think, what are thy gloomy Christians compared with her, and if thou dost not understand the difference, then go away to them. . . . But this sight will cure

thee."

Vinicius distended his nostrils through which entered the odor of violets which filled the whole room. He grew pale, for he thought that if he could pass his lips along Lygia's shoulders in that manner it would be a kind of sacrilegious delight so great that should the world afterwards cease to exist he would not care. But, accustomed to quick perception of what was taking place in himself, he noticed that in that moment he thought of Lygia, and of her alone.

After a while Petronius said:

"Eunice, divine one, order wreathes for our heads and a breakfast."

And when she went awaj' he turned to Vinicius:

"I wished to free her, but dost thou know what she answered, 11 would prefer to be thy slave than the wife of Caesar.' And she would not consent. Then I freed her without her knowledge. The praetor did this for me, and did not require her presence. But she knows nothing of it; neither does she know that this house and all my jewels, with the exception of iny family gems, will belong to her in case of my death."

Saying this he rose, paced the room, and said:

' Love changes some more, some less, and it also has changed me. Once I loved the odor of verbenas, but as Eunice prefers violets, I took a liking to them' above all other flowers, and from the time the spring came we have had only violets."

Here he stopped before Vinicius and said: "And dost thou always stick to nard?"

"Oh, give me peace," answered the young man.

"I wished that thou shouldst look at Eunice, and speak to her of thee, because thou too, lookest, perhaps, in the distance for what is near. Maybe for thee, too, somewhere in thy cubiculum a true and simple heart is beating. Place a balsam to thy wounds. Thou sayest that Lygia loves thee Probably she does. But what kind of love is that which renounces itself? Dost it not signify that there is something stronger than that love? No, my dear boy, Lygia is not Eunice."

To this Vinicius answered:

'All is only one torture. I saw thee kissing Eunice's shoulders, and I thought then that if Lygia would bare hers to me, then let the earth afterwards open under us. But at the verj<sup>r</sup> thought of it a certain fear seized me, as if I had assaulted a vestal or intended to dishonor a divinity.... Lygia is not Eunice; only I understand the difference otherwise than thou. Love changed thy nostrils, therefore thou preferest violets to verbenas, but it changed my soul, so, in spite of my misery and desire, I prefer that Lygia remains such as she is rather than to be similar to others."

Petronius shrugged his shoulders.

"In that instance no injustice is done to thee; but I do, not understand this."

But Vinicius answered feverishly:

"Yes! yes! We can no longer understand each other."

Again a moment of silence followed, after which Petronius said:

"May Hades devour thy Christians! They filled thee with disgust and destroyed the sense of life. May Hades devour them! Thou art mistaken in believing that it is a beneficent teaching, for beneficence is that which gives to the people happiness; namely, beauty, love and power, but they call this vanity. Thou art mistaken in thinking that they are just, for if evil we are to repay with good, with what shall we pay good? And, besides, if for both there is one pay why then should the people be good?"

"No, the pay is not alike; but according to their teaching,

it begins in the future life, which is not transient."

"I do not enter into that which is impossible to see without eyes. In the meantime, they are simply drivelers. Ursus strangled Croton to death, for he has limbs of iron, but they are dreamers, and the future cannot belong to dreamers."

"Life begins with them together with death.",

"That is as if somebody should say, The day begins to-

gether with the night. Hast thou the intention to capture Lygia?"

I 'No. I cannot pay her with evil for good, and I swore that I would not do this."

"Hast thou the intention to accept the teachings of Christ?"

"I do, but my nature cannot endure it."

"And wilt thou be able to forget Lygia?"

"No."

" Then travel."

The slaves announced at that moment that the breakfast was ready, but Petronius, to whom it seemed he had struck a good idea, continued to talk on the way to the triclinium.

'Thou hast ridden over a part of the world, but only as a soldier who hurries to the place of destination and does not stop on the way. Come with us to Achæa. Cæsar has not given up the intention of traveling. He will be stopping everywhere on the way to sing, gather wreathes, plunder temples, and at last he will return as a triumphator to Italy. It will be something like a march of Bacchus and Apollo in one person. Augustian men and women, thousands of others. By Castor! it will be worthy of being seen, for the

world has not seen anything like it hitherto."

Here he placed himself on the bench before the table, and after a slave had put a wreath of anemones on his head, he continued: "What hast thou seen in Corbulon's service? Nothing! Hast thou visited the Grecian temples thoroughly as I have, I who for more' than two years passed from the hands of one guide to the hands of another? Hast thou been in Rhodos to look at the place where the colossus stood? Hast thou seen in Panopeus and Focida, the clay from which Prometeus shaped man; or in Sparta, the egg laid by Leda; or in Athens, the famous Sarmatian cuirass, made of horse; hoops; or on the Euboea, Agamemnon's vessel; or the cup for whose form the left breast of Helen served? Hast thou seen Alexandria, Memphis, the Pyramids, the hair of Tsydia, which she tore from her head through grief for Oziris? Hast thou heard the groan of Memnon? The world is large and not everything ends on the Trans-Tiber! I will accompany Cæsar, and then when he returns, I will leave him and go to Cyprus, for there my golden haired goddess wishes that we should offer doves to Paphos Cipriada together, and thou must know that whatever she wishes, happens.

<11 am thy slave, " said Eunice. But he leaned his wreathed head on her bosom and said with a smile:

"Then I am a slave of a slave. I admire thee, divine

creature, from head to feet."

Then he said to Vinicius: ' Come with us to Cyprus, but first remember that thou must see Ctesar. It is wrong that thou hast not seen him yet; Tygellinus is ready to use this to thy disadvantage. . He has not, it is true a personal hatred, but he cannot love thee, if it is only that thou art my nephew. We will say that thou wert sick. We have to think over what thou must answer him if he will ask thee about Lygia. The best way is to wave thy hand and tell him that she was divine, till she wearied thee. He understands this. Also tell him that the sickness kept thee at home, that the fever was augmented by sorrow, that thou wert unable to be in Neapolis and hear his song, and that thou wert helped to health only by the hope that thou wilt hear him. Do not fear to exaggerate. Tygellinus promises that he will think out for Caesar, something not only great, but large. I am only afraid that he will undermine me. I am also afraid of thy disposition.

"Dost thou know," said Vinicius, "that there are people who do not fear Cmsar, and live as peacefully as if he was

not in the world?""

"I know whom thou wilt mention. Christians."

"Yes. Theyalone. But our life—what is it if not a continued fear?"

Leave me alone with thy Christians. They do not fear Ctesar, for perhaps he has not heard of them, and in any case he knows nothing of them and he cares as much for them as withered leaves. And I tell thee that they are drivelers, that thoh feelest this thyself, and that if thy nature shudders at their teachings it is because thou feelest their impotency. Thou art a man from another clay, and therefore do not trouble yourself with them. We will be able to live and to die, and what they are able to do is unknown."

Vinicius was struck by these words, and when he returned home he began to think that perhaps the goodness and mercy of the Christians proves the incapability of their souls. It seemed to him that people having strength and energy could not pardon thus. It came to his mind that this can be in fact the reason of repugnance which his Roman soul feels. towards that teaching. "We will be able to live and to die." But they! Thej' know only how to forgive, but they do not understand either a real love nor a real hatred.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Caesar soon wearied of Rome, and after a few days was again animated with a desire to return to Achaea. He even, • issued an edict, in which he declared that absence would not last long and the public affairs would not be exposed to any danger. Consequently in the company of Augustians, among whom was Vinicius, he returned to the Capitol to make offerings for a favorable journey. But on the next day when he visited the temple of Vesta, an event happened which changed his plans. Nero did not believe in gods, but he feared them, especially the mysterious Vesta, which filled him with such a fear that at the sight of the divinity and sacred fire his hair suddenly rose from terror, his teeth chattered, and trembling he dropped in the arms of Vinicius, who happened to be behind him. He was immediately carried out of the temple and brought to the Palatine, where, although he recovered soon, he did not leave his bed for a whole day. He also declared to the great astonishment of those present, that he would postpone his journey until later, for the divinity warned him secretly against haste. An hour later it was publicly announced throughout Rome, that Caesar, seeing the saddened faces of the citizens and actuated by the love for them, as a father to his children, remains with them to share their pleasures.

The people, delighted by the resolution, and also certain that neither games nor distribution of grain would be missed, assembled in crowds before the gate of the Palatine, raising shouts in honor of the divine Caesar, who interrupted the play of dice with which he amused himself with the Augustians, and said: "Yes! it was necessary to put it off. Egypt and the dominion, the Orient, according to prediction will not miss me, therefore Achaea will not be lost. I will

deepen the isthmus of Corinth, and we will erect such monuments in Egypt, that the pyramids' will look insignificant beside them. I will order a sphinx built seven times larger than the one which, near Memphis, looks into the desert, but I will command it to be given my likeness. The after ages will speak only of that monument and of me."

'1 In thy verse, thou hast buit thee already a monument larger, not seven, but thrice seven times larger than the

pyramid of Cheops," said Petronius.
"And with song?" asked Nero.

"Alas! if only a statue could be built for thee, like that of Memnon, to call with thy voice at the sunrise. For all the after ages the seas adjoining Egypt would swarm with ships, on which crowds from three parts of the world would listen to thy song."

"Alas, who can do that?" said Nero.

"But thou canst order cut out of granite thyself driving a quadriga."

"That is true! I will do it."

"Thou wilt be a gift to humanity."

" In Egypt I will marry Luna, who is a widow, and then I shall be a real god."

And to us thou wilt give for wives the stars, and we will make a new constellation of Nero. But marry Vitelius with the Nile, that he may bring forth hippapotamuses. To' Tygellinus give the desert, he will be then the king of jack-

"And what dost thou destinate for me?" asked Vatinius.

"May Apis bless thee! Thou ha,st arranged for us such games in Beneventum, that I cannot wish thee evil. Make a pair, of boots for the sphinx, whose paws may grow cold during night-dews, and afterwards thou wilt make sandals. for the Colossuses which form the ways leading to the temples. Everybody will find there a suitable occupation. Domicius Afer for instance, will become a treasurer, being known for his honesty. I am glad, Csesar, when thou dream of Egypt, and I am saddened that thou hast postponed thy departure."

But Nero said:

"Your mortal eyes saw nothing, for the divinitybecomes invisible to whom it wishes. Know that when I was in the temple of Vesta, she herself came up to me and whispered in my very ear: 'Postpone thy departure.' That happened so unexpectedly that I was terrified; for such visible care of the gods over me, I ought to be grateful to them."

"We were all terrified said Tygellinus, and tlie vestal Rubria fainted."

"Rubria!" said Nero, "what a snowy neck she has."

"But she blushes at thy sight a divine Caesar!"

"Yes! I also noticed that. This is astonishing. There is something divine in every vestal, and Rubria is very beautiful."

Here he meditated for a moment and then asked:

'1 Tell me why the people fear Vesta, more than other gods? Why is that?. Fear even seized me, though I am the high priest. I remember that I fell bn my back and would have dropped to the floor, if some one had not supported me. Who was it?"

"I answered Vinicius."

"Oh! thou fierce A res? Why wertthounotin Beneventum. I was told that thou art sick, and indeed thou hast a changed face. But I have heard that Croton wished to murder thee? Is that true?

"Yes, it is so, and he broke my arm, but I defended myself."

"With a broken arm?"

<sup>1</sup> A certain barbarian who was stronger than Croton helped me." Nero looked at him with astonishment.

"Stronger than Croton? May be thou art joking? Croton was the strongest of men, and now Syphax, from Ethiopia, is."

"I tell thee, Caesar, what I saw with my own eyes."

• 'Where is that pearl? Didn't he become the king of Nemorenia?"

'1 I cannot tell, I lost sight of him."

'Not even knowest thou from what nation he is?"

"I had a broken arm, so that I could not question him about anything"

"Seek and find him for me."

To this Tygellinus said: "I will occupy myself with this."

But Nero continued to speak to Vinicius:

"I thank thee that thou hast supported me, I might break my head if I would fall. Once thou wert a good companion, but, since the time of war and service under Corbulo, thou becamest wild, and I see thee seldom."

And after a moment of silence he said:

< 'How is that maiden with the narrow hips.... whom thou hast loved, and whom I took away from Aulus for thee?....

Vinicius grew confused, but Petronius came to his aid in a

moment:

" I will wager, lord, that he forgot. Dost thou see his confusion? Ask him how many there were of them since that time, and I will not guarantee that he will be able to answer even to that. Viniciuses are good soldiers, but still better breeders. They must have a retinue of women. Punish him for this, lord, and do not invite him to the feast Tygellinus is promising to arrange in thy honor on the pond of Agrippa."

"No, I will not do this. I trust Tygellinus that beauties

will not be lacking."

"Should the Graces be lacking where Amor will be

present?" answered Tygellinus.

But Nero said: "Weariness torments me! I have remained in Rome at the goddess' will, but I cannot endure it. I will go to Ancium. I am stifling in these narrow streets, amid these sinking houses and filthy back streets. The polluted air even reaches my house and my gardens. Oh, if an earthquake would destroy Rome, if some angered god would level it to the ground, then I would show you how a city which is the head of the world and my capital ought to be built."

"Caesar," answered Tygellinus, "thousayest, If some

angered god would destroy the city. Is it so ?"

"What of it?"

"But art thou not a god?"

Nero waved his hand with the expression of tediousness, and said:

"We will see what thou wilt arrange for us on the ponds of Agrippa. After that I will go to Ancium. You are all small, therefore you do not understand what great things I need."

Saying this, he closed his eyes, showing that he needed rest. The Augustians began to depart. Petronius went out with Vinicius saying:

"And so thou art called upon to participate in the amusement. The bronzed-beard has renounced the journey but instead he will rave more than ever and will act in the city

as if in his own house. Thou too endeavor to find amusement and forgetfullness in the frenzy. By the deuce! we have conquered the world and have the right to amuse ourselves. Thou, Marcus, art a very fine fellow, and to this I partly ascribe the weakness I have for thee. By the Ephesian Diana! If thou couldst see thy manly brow and thy face in which the old blood of Quirites is evident. The others look like freedmen near thee. It is so! If not for that wild teaching, Lygia would to-day be in thy house. Try yet to prove to me that they are not the enemies of life and people.... They treated thee well, therefore thou canst be grateful to them, but in thy place I would hate that teaching, and seek delight where it can be found. Thou art a manly fellow I repeat to thee, and Rome is swarming with divdrced women."

"I only wonder that all this does not annoy thee," answered Vinicius.

11 Who told you that? It has annoyed me for sometime, but, I am not of thy years.' Besides, I have other likings, which are lacking in thee. I love books, which thou dost not, I love poetry which wearies thee, I love pottery, and a multitude of things on which thou dost not even look. I have pains in my spine, which thou never had, and finally, I found Eunice, but thou hast found nothing like her. Eor me it is pleasant to stay at home, amidst masterpieces, but I will never make an aesthetic out of thee. I know that I will find in life nothing more than I have found already, but thou art yet expecting and seeking all the time. If death came to thee with all thy courage and ail thy sorrows, thou wouldst die with astonishment, that it was necessary to leave the world, but I would accept death as a necessity with this conviction, that in the whole world there does not exist such berries as I have not tried. I do not hurry, but neither will I linger. I will endeavor to be joyful to the end. There are merry sceptics in the world.

1 'For me the stoics are fools, but the stoicism at least tempers, but thy Christians bring sadness into the world, which

is to life what rain is to nature.

"Dost thou know what I have learned? That during the festivities which will be arranged by Tygellinus, on the shores of the pond of Agrippa lupanarias will be erected, and in them will be assembled women of the very first

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houses of Rome. Will there not be found even one beautiful enough to be able to console thee? There will also be maidens which for the first time enter society.... as nymphs. Such is our Roman empire. It is warm already! The southern wind will warm the waters and will not pimple the naked bodies. And thou, Marcus, know that not one will be found which will resist thee, notone, even if she was a vestal."

Vinicius began to touch his head with his hand, like a man occupied with one thought. "Luck is necessary to find

such a one."

"And who caused that if not the Christians!... But the people whose emblem is a cross, cannot be different. Listen to me: Greece was beautiful and created the world's wisdom; we have created the power; and what, as thou believest can that teaching create? If th'ouknowest, then explain it to me, for, by Pollux! I cannot surmise it."

Vinicius shrugged his shoulders. 'It would seem that

thou art afraid lest I become a Christian."

"I fear, lest thou shouldst spoil thy life. If thou canst not be Greece, then be Rome: rule and enjoy. I despise Bronzebeard, for he is a Grecian mountebank. If he was a Roman, I would recognize that he was right, permitting himself frenzies. Promise me, that when thou retumest home and wilt find some Christian there, thou wilt show him thy tongue. If he will be Glaucus, the physician, he will not even wonder.—Farewell till we meet on the pond of Agrippa.

## CHAPTER IX.

Pretorians surrounded the groves on the bank of the pond of Agrippa, lest the multitude of spectators might hinder Caesar and his guests, for it was said that everything in. Rome distinguished for wealth, intellector beauty was at that feast, which had no equal in the annals of the city. Tygellinus wished to recompense Caesar for the postponed journey to Achaea, and at the same time surpass all who ever entertained him, and prove to him that no one was able to amuse him as he. While staying with Caesar in Neapolis, and afterwards in Beneventum, he made preparations and was send-

ing out orders to bring beasts, birds, rare fishes and plants, not omitting pottery and webs, from all quarters of the world, which were to render the feast most magnificent. The revenues of whole provinces went to satisfy the extravagant projects, but the powerful favorite did not need to care for that. It is influence grew greater every day. Perhaps Tygellinus was not yet dearer than others to Nero, but he was becoming more and more indispensable.

Petronius surpassed him in polish, intellect, and in conversations knew better how to amuse Caesar, but to his misfortune he surpassed even him in that talent, and therefore roused his jealousy. Moreover, he knew not how to be an obedient tool in everything, and Caesar feared his opinion when it was a question in matters of taste; but with Tygellinus, he never felt restrained. The very name, arbiter elegantiarum, which was given to Petronius, irritated Nero's selfishness, for who if not he himself, ought to bear that name?

Tygellinus however, had so much sense that he accounted to himself his lacks, and seeing that he could not compete with either Petronius nor Lucan, nor others, when birth, talents or learning distinguished them, he resolved to excel them by the grandeur of his services, and above all by such a luxury that even the imagination of Caesar would

be dazzled by it.

So he had arranged the feast on a gigantic raft, built from gilded beams. The edges were draped with magnificient cockle shells, found in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, flashing with all the colors of the rainbow. The sides were covered by palm-bushes, groves of lotus and blooming roses, amidst which were hidden fountains spouting perfumes, statues of gods and gold or silver cages filled with various colored birds. In the middle an immense tent was erected, or rather so as not to hide the sight, only the top was covered with Syrian purple resting on silver columns, and under them were the tables prepared for the banqueters, burdened with Alexandrian glass, crystals and pottery, simply priceless plunder from Italy, Greece and Asia Minor.

From the accumulation of plants it had the appearance of an island. A garden was joined by cords of gold and purple, with boats in the shape of fishes, swans, mews and flamnigos, in which sat naked male and female rowers with forms and features of marvelous beauty, with hair dressed in Oriental fashion or bound in golden nets. When Nero arrived with Poppæa, the Augustians set foot on the principal raft and were seated under the purple tent, the boats moved, the oars began to strike the water, the golden ropes stretched, and the raft, together with the feast and guests began to move and describe circles on the pond. Other boats and rafts surrounded it, full of zither and harp girls, whose rosy bodies on the blue background of the sky and water, and in the reflection of the golden instruments seemed to absorb that blue and those reflections, and to change and bloom like flowers.

From the shore-groves and queer buildings purposely erected and hidden among thickets, music and songs were also heard. The neighborhood and grove resounded, and the echoes bore the sounds of horns and trumpets. Cæsar himself, having on one side Poppæa and on the other Pythagoras, admired everything, and especially when among the boats yohng slave maidens appeared disguised as sirenes, covered with green nets imitating scales, he did not spare praise to Tygellinus. He looked, from habit, at Petronius, wishing to know the opinion of the "arbiter," but Petronius kept silent, and only when questioned directly answered:

'I think, lord, that ten thousand naked maidens make a

smaller impression than one."

But the "floating, feast" pleased Cæsar, for it was something new. Besides, such quaint dishes were served that the imagination of Apicius would have been overcome at the sight of them, so many wines that Otho, who knew of eighty of them, would have hidden under the water from shame if he could have seen that luxury. Besides the women, only the Augustians sat down to the table, among whom Vinicius eclipsed all for handsomeness. Formerly his figure and face indicated too much .the soldier, but now the internal trouble and physical pain through which he had passed had chisseled his features as if the delicate hand of a master sculptor had passed over them. His complexion had lost its former swarthy shade, but the yellowish gleam of Numidnm marble remained upon it. The eyes had grown larger a nd more sad. Only his body retained its former powerful lines, as if created for armor; but above that body of a legionist was seen the head of a Greek god, or at least of a refined patrician, subtle and splendid at the same time. Petronius

telling him that no Augustian lady would be able to resist him spoke as an experienced man. All looked at him, not excepting Poppma or the vestal Rubria, whom Caesar wished to have at the feast. The wines, cooled in the snows of the mountains, soon warmed the hearts and heads of the feasters. From the shore-groves more and more boats, shaped like grasshoppers and dragon flies, moved forward. The blue surface of the pond looked as if somebody had strewed it with flowers, or as if butterflies were sitting on it. Above the boats, here and there flew pigeons, fastened to silver and blue threads, and other birds from India and Africa. The sun had already passed through the larger part of the sky, and the day, though it was but the beginning of May, was warm, and even hot. The pond rippled from the strokes of oars, which kept time to the music, but not the least breath of air stirred. The groves stood immovable, as if lis-'tening and gazing at what was taking place on the water.

The raft circled on the pond bearing the guests, who were becoming drunker and noisier. The feast was not half finished when the order in which they sat at the table was no longer observed. Caesar himself set the example, for rising, he i ordered Vinicius, who rested near Rubria the vestal, to withdraw, and having occupied his triclinium, began to whisper something in her ear. Vinicius found himself near Poppsea, who after a while stretched forth her arm to him, · begging him to fasten her loosened bracelet, and when he had done this with trembling hands she cast a glance at him from under her long lashes as if ashamed, and shook her golden head as if denying something. In the. meanwhile the sun grew larger, redder, and slowly sank behind the tops of the groves. The guests were for the most part thoroughly intoxicated. The raft now circled near the shore, on which, amidst tree-bushes and flowers, were seen groups of people, disguised'as fauns or as satyrs, playing on flutes, bag-pipes and drumlets; also groups of girls representing nymphs, dryads and hamadryads. Darkness came at last amid drunken shouts in honor of Luna, who rose above the tent. Then the groves began to shine with thousands of lamps. From the lupanarias standing on the shore shone bright flashes of light, and on the terraces appeared new groups, also naked, consisting of wives and daughters of the first Roman houses. They, with voice and voluptuous movemerits, began to call the feasters. Finally the raft touched the shore and Caesar, with the Augustians, rushed into the groves and scattered in the lupanarias, tents hidden amid thickets, in grottos artificially arranged among springs and fountains. Frenzy seized all, nobody knew Caesar's whereabouts, nobody knew who was a senator, who a knight, who a rope dancer or a musician. Satyrs and fauns began to chase the nymphs. Lamps were struck with thyrses to quench them, and certain parts of the groves were soon covered with darkness. Everywhere were heard loud shouts, laughs, whispers, or panting breasts of both sexes. In fact, Rome had never seen its like before.

Vinicius was not drunk, as on the occasion of that feast in Caesar's palace, at which Lygia was present, but he was dazzled and intoxicated by the sight of everything going on, and finally he was seized by the fever of delight. Rushing into the forest he ran with others, watching to see which one of the dryads would seem to him the most beautiful. Every moment new groups ran past him, singing and shouting, pursued by fauns, satyrs, senators, knights and sounds of music. Noticing at last a retinue of maidens, led by one disguised as Diana, he sprang to it, wishing to look closer at the goddess, and suddenly his heart became torpid in his breast. It seemed to him that in the goddess, with the moon on the forehead, he recognized Lygia.

But they encircled him with a mad whirl, and after a while, evidently wishing him to pursue them, scampered away like a herd of deer. But he remained on the spot, breathless, for though he recognized that Diana was not Lygia, and from a close view she was not even similar to her, the strong impression deprived him of force. Suddenly he was seized by a yearning for Lygia, far greater than he had ever experienced before. Lygia never seemed dearer, purer nor more beloved to him than in that forest of frenzy and wild dissipation. A moment before he himself wished to drink from that goblet and participate in that unfettering of senses and shamelessness, but now aversion and abhorence seized him. He felt that disgrace choked him, that his breast needed air, and his eyes the sight of stars hidden by the thicket of this terrible grove, so he determined to flee. But he had scarcely moved when some figure appeared before him with her head concealed with a veil, and resting her hands on his shoulders began to whisper, covering him with her passionate breath.

"I love thee .... Come! Nobody will see us. Hasten I"

Vinicius awoke as if from a sleep.

"Who art thou?"

But she leaned on him with her breast and began to insist:

'1 Hasten 1 Look how lonely it is here, and I love thee! Come!"

"Who art thou?" repeated Vinicius.

»"Guess !"....

Saying this, she pressed her lips to his through the veil, drawing his head to her at the same time, till at last when breath failed her she tore her face from him.

"Night of love!...Night of distraction!" she spoke, catching her breath quickly. "To-day it is permitted!....
There, thou hast me!"

But Vinicius was burned by that kiss and it filled him with new abhorence. His soul and heart were elsewhere, and nothing existed for him in all the world save Lygia. So pushing back the veiled figure, he said:

"Whoever thou art, I love another, and do not wish

thee." But she lowered his head and whispered:

" Remove the veil."

But at that moment leaves in the nearby myrtles began to rustle: the figure vanished like a dream; from a distance her laugh resounded, somewhat strange and ominous. Petronius appeared before Vinicius.

"I saw and heard," he said, and Vinicius answered:

"Let us go away from here!" And they went. They passed the lupanarias gleaming with lights, the grove, the mounted pretorious and found the litters.

mounted pretorians and found the litters.

"I will go with thee," said Petronius. And they sat in the litter together. But they were both silent on the way, and only when they were in the atrium of Vininius' home, Petronius said:

"Dost thou know who that was?"

"Rubria?" asked Vinicius, shuddering at the thought that Rubria was a vestal.

"No."

"Who then?"

Petronius lowered his voice: "Vestas' fire became con-.

taminated, for Rubria was with Caesar, but with thee spoke...."

Here he finished in a still lower voice:

"Diva Augusta."

A moment of silence followed.

"Caesar," said Petronius, 'I knows not how to hide before her his desire for Rubria, so may be she wished to revenge herself, and I hindered you because if thou wouldst, recognizing Augusta, refuse her, thou wouldst have been lost without rescue. Thou, Lygia, and perhaps I too."

"I have enough of Rome, Caesar, feasts, Augusta, Tygellinus, and all of you! I am choking; I cannot live

thus! I cannot! Dost thou understand me?"

"Vinicius, thou hast lost thy judgement."

"I love only her 1"
"What then?"

"Therefore, I don't wish another love, I do not care for your feasts, your shamelessness and your crimes!"
"What is taking place within thee? Art thou a Christian?"

And the young man holding his head with both his hands,

began to repeat as if with dispair:
'Not yet I Not yet!"

## CHAPTER X.

Petronius went home, shrugging his shoulders and greatly displeased. He also saw that he and Vinicius had ceased' to understand each other, that a gulf yawned between them. Formerly Petronius had a great influence over the young soldier. He was for him a model in everything, and oftentimes a few ironic words sufficed 'to restrain Vinicius or to urge him forward. At present the former methods of Petronius were of no avail. His wit and irony had no effect along the new layers which love and contact with Christians had put on the soul of Vinicius. The experienced sceptic understood that he had lost the key to that soul. This filled him with dissatisfaction and even fear, which was augmented by the events of that night. If, on the part of Augusta, it was not a passing whim but a more lasting de-

sire, there will be one of two things, either Vinicius will not. resist her and be lost by any accident, or, what is more, probable, he will resist, and in that case he will also be lost. '11 can be lost with him. I am his relative, and Augusta,, including the whole family, will throw the weight of her influence over to Tygellinus' side." Both sides of the dilemma were unpleasant. Petronius was a courageous man, and was not afraid of death, but expecting nothing from it, he did not wish to hurry it. After a meditation he resolved at last that the best and safest way was to send Vinicius from Rome on a journey. Ah! if he could give him in addition Lygia for a companion he would do this joyfully. But he hoped that, without this, it would not be difficult to persuade him. Then he would spread the report in Palatine of the sickness of Vinicius and thus remove all danger from him and himself. Finally, Augusta did not know whether she was recognized by Vinicius. She might suppose that she was not. Petronius wished, before all, to win time, for he understood that if Cæsar started to Achæa then Tygellinus, who understood nothing in the sphere of art, will descend to second place, and will lose his influence. In Greece Petronius was sure of victory over all rivals. Meanwhile he decided to watch over Vinicius and encourage him to consent to the journey. During a number of days he was thinking that if he would procure an edict from Cæsar expelling

with other confessors of Christ, and with her Vinicius. Then it would not be necessary to persuade him, and the thing itself was possible. It was not so long ago when the Jews began disturbances through hatred toward the Christians, and Claudius Cæsar, not being able to distinguish the one from the other, expelled the Jews. Therefore why should not Nero expel the Christians? There would be more room in Rome. After that "floating feast" Petronius saw Cæsar every day in the Palatine and in other houses. It would be easy to advance him a similar idea, and Cæsar never resisted persuasions which brought anybody ruin or harm. After mature consideration Petronius arranged a plan for himself. He would give a feast and persuade Cæsar to issue the edict. He even had a well founded hope that Cæsar would confide to him its execution. Then he would send Lygia out with all consideration due the mistress of Vinicius, for example.

the Christians from Rome; Lygia would leave it, together

to Bajse, and let them love and amuse themselves there with Christianity as much as they wished. Meanwhile he visited Vinicius often; first, because, with all his Roman egoism, he could not get rid of an attachment to his nephew; second, to persuade him to journey. Vinicius affected sickness, and did not show himself on the Palatine, where new plans appeared every day.

Finally one day Petronius learned from the lips of Caesar himself that he was preparing to go to Ancium, and the next day he went directly to inform Vinicius of this. But the young tribune showed him a list of persons invited to Ancium which was brought that morning by a freedman of

Caesar.

"My name is on it," he said; "so is thine. When thou

wilt return thou wilt find the same at thy home."

"If I was not among the invited," answered Petronius,

'that would signify that I am to die, and I do not expect this to take place before the journey to Achaea. I shall be

indispensable to Nero."

Then, looking over the list, he said:

"We had hardly come to Rome before it is necessary to leave again and go to Ancium. But it must be, for this is not only an invitatiou but a command."

"And if some should not obey?"

" He would get an invitation of a different kind, to prepare for a longer journey-so long that he would never return. What a pity that thou hast not taken my advice and left Rome when there was yet time. Now thou must go to Ancuim."

'11 must go to Ancuim.... See what times we live in and what vile slaves we are."

"< Hast thou noticed this only to-day?"

"No; but thou wert proving to me that the Christian teaching is the enerfay of life, for it puts chains on it. Can they be any heavier than the ones we carry? Thou hast said, Greece has created wisdom and beauty, and Romepower. 'Where is our power?"

"Call Chilo. I have not the slightest inclination to philosophize. By Hercules! It is not I who created these times, nor am I responsible for them. Let us speak of Ancuim. Know that great danger awaits thee there, and perhaps it

might be better for thee to test thy strength with Ursus,

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who choked Croton, than to go there. But still thou canst not refuse. "

Vinicius waved his hand carelessly and said:

"Danger! We are all groping in the darkness of death,

and every moment some head plunges into that shadow."

'Shall I enumerate all who had a little sense, and therefore, in spite of the times of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero reached eighty or ninety years? May at least such a Dominicius Afere serve thee as an example. He grew old peacably, though he was a thief and a rascal all his life."

"Maybe on account of that!" answered Vinicius.

Then he began to look over the list and said.

"Tygellinus, Vatinius, Sextus, Africanus, Aguillinus, Regulus, Suilius, Nerulinus, Eprius, Marcellus and so oni What a collection of scoundrels and rascals! And they govern the world!.... Would it not be better for them to carry around to towns some Egyptian or Syrian divinity, for exhibition, or earn their bread with fortune-telling or dancing!" "Or to exhibit learned monkeys, dogs, or an ass who plays a flute"-added Petronius. " All this is true, but let us speak of something more important. Collect thy wits and listen to me: I was telling in Palatine that thou art sick, and unable to leave the house, still thy name appears on the list which proves that somebody does not believe my. stories and procured this purposely. Nero cared nothing for this, for thou art for him only a soldier, with whom at the very highest one can speak about races in the circus, and who has no knowledge whatever of poetry and music.

"So it must be Poppsea who procured this, which means that her desire for thee was not a passing fancy, and that

she wishes to conquer thee."

" She is a courageous Angusta!"

"She. is courageous indeed, for she can ruin thee without any help. May Venus inspire her as soon as possible with another love; but as long as she desires thee, thou must preserve the greatest caution. She began to appear common in the eyes of Copperbeard; he prefers Rubria or Pythagoras; even through self-love only he would wreak the most terrible vengeance on you both."

1 'I did not know that it was she who spoke to me in the grove, but thou hast listend and knowest what I answered,

that I love another and do not care for her."

" But I implore thee by all the Plutonian gods, do not loose your remaining reason, which the Christians have left thee. How canst thou hestiate having a choice between probability and sure ruin? Did not I already tell thee, that if thou wouldst wound Augusta's self-love, there would be no help for thee? By Hades! If life has become loathsome to thee, then better open thy veins at once or throw thyself on a sword, for if thou wilt offend Poppeea, a death less light awaits thee. Formerly it was more pleasant to speak with thee! What concerns thee specially? Wilt thou wane? Will that prevent thy love for Lygia? Also remember that Poppsea saw her on the Palatine, and it will not be difficult for her to guess for whom thou throwest away such lofty favors. And then she will get Lygia even from under the ground. Thou wilt loose not only thyself, but Lygia too. Dost thou understand?"

Vinicius listened as if he was thinking of something else,

•and finally said: "I must see her."

"Yes, Lygia?"

"Dost thou know where she is?"

"No."

"So thou wilt begin again to search for her in old cemeteries and in the Trans-Tiber?"

"I do not know, but I must see her."

"Well, although she is a Christian, may be she is more sensible than thee and it will most certainly be, if she does not want thy ruin."

Vinicius shrugged his shoulders.

"She saved me from Ursus' hands."

<sup>1</sup> Then hasten, for the Bronzebeard will not delay his departure. He can issue sentences of death from Ancium too."

But Vinicius did not listen. One thought only occupied his mind, namely, of seeing Lygia, so he began to meditate over means. Meanwhile, a circumstance happened which could change all difficulties, for the next day Chilo came unexpectedly to him.

He came wretched and battered, with signs of hunger on his face. The servants, however, who formerly had the order to let him in at any time of night or day, did not dare to stop him, so that he entered straight into the atrium, and

standing before Vinicius, said:

'•May the gods give thee immortality and share with thee thee command of the world."

Vinicius in the first moment had the mind to throw him out of the door. But a thought came to him that the Greek may know something of Lygia, and the curiosity overpowered the aversion.

"Is that thee?" he asked. "What is happening with

thee?" '

"It is bad for a son of Jove," answered Chilo. "The real virtue is a ware for which no one asks to-day, and a genuine sage must be glad even of this, if once in five days he has something with which to buy a sheep's head from the butcher, which he gnaws in a garret and washes down with tears. O lord! Everything thou hast given me I expended on books with Abractus, and afterwards I was robbed and ruined; the slave which was to write down my teaching, rah away, taking the rest of that which thy generosity bestowed on me. I am a beggar, but I thought to myself: To whom can I betake, if not to thee,. Serapis, whom I love, idolize-and for whom I exposed my life I."

" Wherefore hast thou come, and what dost thou bring?"

"For aid of Baal, and to bring thee my misery, my tears, my love and finally news which out of love to thee, I have gathered. Dost thou remember, lord, what I have told thee once, that I made a cession of one thread from the girdle of Venera of Paphos, to the slave of the divine Petronius ?-. .. I was now learning if that has helped her, and thou, a son of the sun, knowest what is happening in that house; thou knowest also what Eunice is there. I have yet another such thread; I kept it for thee, O lord."

Here he stopped, seeing the anger which was rising on the brow of Vinicius, and wishing to anticipate the outburst,

quickly said:

' 'I know where the divine Lygia is living. I will show

thee, 0 lord, the house and the lane.

Vinicius repressed the emotion with which that information filled him and said:

" Where is she?"

"With Linus, the elder priest of the Christians. She is there with Ursus, who goes as formerly to the miller who isnamed as thy dispensatory Demas,... Yes, Demas I. ... Ursus is working at nights, so that at night he will not be-

found at the house.... Linus is old, and in the house with him are only two aged women."

" Whence dost thou know all this?"

Thou remember, lord, that the Christians had me in their hands and spared me. It is true, (Baucus is mistaken believing that I am the cause of his misfortunes, but he believed it, and the poor fellow believes hitherto, and still they spared me ! So do not wonder, lord, that gratitude filled my heart. I am a man of better times.. Therefore, I thought: Shall I forsake my friends and benefactors? Would that not be a hardness of heart not to enquire about them, not to fine out what is happening with them, and where they live? By the Pessinuncian Cybele! I am not capable of that. At the beginning I was restrained by the fear that they should understand my intentions wrongly. But the love the had for them proved to be greater than the fear, «uu especially that easiness with which they forgive all wrongs, added hope in me. But before all I thought of thee, lord. Our last expedition ended in a defeat, and can such a son of Pontuna be reconciled with that thought?

Therefore, I prepared a victory for thee. The house stands separately. Thou canst order thy slaves to surround it, so that even a mouse will not escape. 0, lord, lord! it only depends on thee that that generous, royal daughter finds herself in thy house even this night. But if that shall happen, think that, to all this contributed a very poor and

hungry son of my father."

Blood rushed into Vinicius' head. Once more the temptation seized his being. It is true ! that was a way, and this time a sure way. When he will have Lygia in his house who will be able to take her away from him? When once he has made Lygia his mistress; what will remain for her than to become, one forever? And let all teachings perish! What will the Christians then be to him together with their mercy and gloomy religion? Is it not time to shake off all that ? Is it not time to begin to live as all live ? What will Lygia do afterwards, how will she reconcile her fate with the teachings she confesses—this as a thing of less significance. Those are all matters without importance! Before all she will be his, and perhaps to-day. And besides, it is also a question if that teaching will keep its ground in

in her soul, in the presence of that new world for her, against

the delights and ecstacy to which she must yield. And thismay happen yet to-day. It is enough to detain Chilo and give orders at nightfall. And afterwards, delight without end! "What was my life?" thought Vinicius, "suffering unsatisfied desire, and the constant propounding to himself of questions without answer."

In that way his misery would be ended. It is true herecollected having promised her not to raise his hand against her. But by what did he swear? Not by gods, for he did not believe in them; not by Christ, for he did not believe in. Him. Besides, if she should feel herself wronged he will marry her, and in that way will recompense her wrongs. Yes, to this he feels himself bound, for he owes his life to her. Here he recalled that day in which, together with. Croton, he broke into her retreat; he recalled Ursus' raising: his hand above him, and everything that happened afterwards. He saw her again, bent over his bed, dressed in thegarb of a slave, beautiful as a divinity, benevolent and adored. His eyes passed involuntarily to the lararium and to that little cross which she gave him when leaving. But will he pay her for all that with a new attempt? Will hedrag her by the hair to his cubiculum, like a slave? And how will he be able to do this, since he not only desires herbut also loves her, and loves her exactly for the reason that she is pure and virtuous? And suddenly he felt that it was not enough to have her in his house, it was not enough to embrace her in his arms by forcible means, and that his lovewanted something more, that is, her consent, her love and her soul. Blessed the roof if she will enter voluntarily; blessed the moment, blessed the day, blessed the life. Then the happiness of them both will be as inexhaustible as the sea and as the sun. But to seize her by superior forcewould be to kill forever that happiness and at the same time to destroy, defile and render loathsome that which is dearest and most beloved in his life. Horror seized him at the very thought of this. He looked at Chilo, regarding him, hisformer assistant, as foul as a venomous serpent. After a moment he knew what to do. Following the impulse of his fierce Roman nature, he turned to Chilo and said:

<¹1 will not do that which thou advisest me, but, lest thou should go away without thy just recompense I will order to give thee three hundred rods in my domestic ergastulum."</p>

Chilo grew pale. In the beautiful face of Vinicius there was so much cold stubbornness that he could not deceive himself for even a moment that the promised reward was a cruel joke.

So he threw himself on his knees and began to groan in

:a broken voice:

"How so, 0 Persian king? What for?.... Pyramid of grace! Colossus of mercy I What for?.... I am old, hungry, wretched.... I served thee.... Dost thou repay in such a way?"

"As thou repayest the Christians," answered Vinicius,

and called the dispensator.

But Chilo sprang to the young tribune's feet, and embracing them convulsively, cried, with his face covered with deathly pallor:

110 lord ! 0 lord !.... I am old ! Fifty, not three hundred .... Fifty is enough!.... A hundred, not three hundred!

....Mercy! Mercy!"

Vinicius thrust him back with his foot and gave the order.

In the twinkling of an eye two strong Quadi followed the dispensator, and seizing Chilo by the remnants of his hair, wound his head with his own rags and dragged him to the ergastulum.

"In the name of Christ!" .... called the Greek in the cor-

ridor.

Vinicius remained alone. The issued order stirred him up and enlivened him. Meanwhile he endeavored to gather his scattered thoughts and bring them to order. He felt great relief, and the victory which he had gained over himself filled him with hope. It seemed to him that he had done some great deed for Lygia, and that some reward would befall him. In the first moment it did not even come to his mind what a grevious wrong he had perpetrated against Chilo, and that he had ordered him flogged for what he had previously rewarded him. He was yet too much of a Roman that another man's suffering should pain him or that he should occupy his mind with one miserable Greek. And even had he thought of this he would judge that ho had acted properly in ordering to punish the abject wretch. But he was thinking of Lygia. and was speaking to her: "I will not pay thee with evil for good, and when once thou shalt learn how he behaved toward thee, this one who wished to persuade me to raise my hand against thee, thou wilt be grateful to me." Here, however, he paused at the thought, Will Lygia praise his behavior to Chilo? The teaching she confesses commands to forgive. Have not the Christians pardoned the villain, though they had greater reasons for revenge? Only then the cry, "in the name of Christ," has spoken in his bosom. He recalled also that Chilo ransomed himself from the hands of the Lygian, and he resolved to spare him the rest of the punishment. With that object in view he was about to call the dispensator when he entered, and standing before him, said:

" Master, that old man has fainted, and perhaps is dead.

Am I to order him flogged further?"

"Revive him and bring him before me."

The steward of the atrium vanished behind the curtain, but the revival must not have been easy, for Vinicius waitred a long time, and began to grow impatient, when finally the slaves brought Chilo in and, at a given sign, they themselves withdrew.

Chilo was as pale as linen, and along his legs threads of blood were flowing on the atrium's mosaic. He was conscious, however, and falling on his knees began to speak with outstretched hands:

"Thanks to thee, 0 lord I Thou art merciful and great."
"Dog!" said Vinicius, "know that I pardoned thee for that Christ to whom I owe life myself."

"0 lord, 1 will serve Him and thee."

"Hold thy tongue and listen. Rise! Thou wilt go with me and show me the house in which Lygia lives."

Chilo sprang up, but scarcely had he stood on his feet

when he grew pale and said in a fainting voice:

' '0 master, I am really hungry.... I will go, lord, I will go, but 1 have no strength; strength fails me.... Order me given even the remnants from the dish of thy dog."

Vinicius ordered him given something to eat, a piece of gold and a cloak. But Chilo, weakened by the flogging and hunger, could not walk, even after the nourishment, though fear seized him lest Vinicius might take his weakness for resistance and order him flogged again.

"Only let wine warm me," he repeated, his teeth chat-

tering, "I shall be able to go then, even to Great Greece,"

And in fact he regained some strength after a time, and

they went out. The way was long, for Linus lived, as the majority of Christians, on the Trans-Tiber, not far from Myriam's house. At last Chilo showed Vinicius a separate little house, surrounded by a wall covered entirely with ivy, and said:

"It is there, lord."

"Well," said Vinicius, "get thee gone now. But first listen to what I will tell thee. Forget that thou hast served me; forget where Myriam, Peter and Glaucus live; also forget of this house and all Christians. Thou wilt come every month to my house, where Demas, the freedman, will pay thee two pieces of gold. But if thou shouldst continue to spy further I will order to flog thee to death or deliver thee into the hands of- the prefect of the city."

Chilo bowed and said:

"I will forget."

But when Vinicius vanished behind the corner of the street he stretched his hands after him, and threatening with his fists, exclaimed:

"By Acte and the Furies! I will not forget!"

Then he grew weak again.

### CHAPTER XI.

Vinicius went directly to the house in which Myriam dwelled. Outside the gate he met Nazarius, who became confused at his sight, but he greeted the youth kindly and

asked to be conducted to his mother's dwelling.

In the dwelling the patrician found Peter, Glancus, Crispus, and moreover Paul of Tarsus, who returned recently from Fregallse. At the sight of the young tribune astonishment reflected on all the faces, but he said, "I greet you in the name of Christy whom you honor."

"May His name be glorified forever."

"I saw your virtue and experienced your kindness, therefore I come as a friend."

1 'And^we greet thee as a friend "—answered Peter. 11 Be

seated, lord, and share with us our meal as our guest."

<sup>41</sup>1 will sit down and share with you the nourishment, but first listen to me: thou Peter, and thou Paul of Tarsus, to

recognize my sincerity, I know where Lygia is; I passed before the house of Linus, which is not far from this dwelling. I have a right to her given to me by Caesar. I have in the city in my houses nearly five hundred slaves; I could surround her dwelling and seize her, but still I have not done so and will not."

'1 Therefore the blessing of the Lord will be upon thee,

and thjr heart will be purified "—said Peter.

"I thank thee, but listen to me still more. I have not done this, though I live in torment and longing. Before, when I did not know you, I would undoubtedly have taken her and keep her by force, but your virtue and your'teaching, though I do not profess it, has changed something in my soul, so that I do not any more dare to commit violence. I don't know myself why it so happened, but it is so! Hence I came to you, for you take the place of Lygia's father and 'mother, and tell you to give her to me as a wife, and I swear to you, that I will not prohibit her from confessing Christ, but will also begin myself to learn His teaching."

He spoke with erected head, with a peremtory voice, but however, he was moved, and his feet trembled under his striped cloak; and when silence followed his words, he continued to speak as if wishing to anticipate an unfavorable

answer

" I know what obstacles are existing, but I love her as my own eyes, and though I am not yet a Christian, I am neither you enemy nor that of Christ. I wish to be sincere with you, so that you may trust me. At this moment it is a question of my life, but still I tell you the truth. Another one would perhaps tell you: Baptize me! I say, Enlighten me. I believe that Christ rose from the dead, for people who live for truth, who have the courage of their convictions, and who saw Him after death, say so. I believe, for I myself saw that your teaching produces virtue, justice and mercy, but not crimes with which you are charged. I have not had much knowledge of your religion hitherto. Some from you, some from your deeds, some from Lygia, some from conversations with you. But I repeat to you however, that in me something has changed through that teaching. Formerly I held my servants with iron hands, now I cannot. I knew no mercynow I do. 1 loved delight, but now I ran away from the pond of Agrippa, for breath failed me from abhorence.

Formerly I believed in superior force, to-day I renounced it. Know that I do not recognize myself, for feasts, wine, singing, citras, wreathes, the court of Caesar, naked bodies and all crimes are loathsome to me. And when I think that Lygia is as the snow in the mountains, I love her more than ever; and when I think that she is so through your teaching, then I love that teaching too, and desire it! But as I do not understand it, as I do not know whether I will be able to live according to it, and if my nature will endure it, therefore I live in uncertainty and torment as if in a dark prison." Now his face became confused, and a blush covered his cheeks, after which he spoke more and more hastily and with rising emotion. "You see that I am tormented through love and darkness. I was told that neither life, nor human joy, nor happiness, nor law, nor supremacy, nor Roman power can abide in your teaching. Is this so? I was told that you are ma,d; but tell, what do you bring? Is it a sin to love? Is it a sin to experience joy? Is it sinful to wish happiness? Are you the enemies of life? Must a Christian be poor? Should I renounce Lygia?

"What is your truth? Your deeds and your words are as transparent water, but what is at the bottom of that water? You see that I am sincere. Disperse the darkness! For I was told also this: that Greece created wisdom and 'beauty;

Rome created power; and what do they bring?

"So tell me, what do you bring? If there is brightness beliind your doors, then open them to me."

"We bring love," said Peter; and Paul of Tarsus added:

"If I spoke with, human and angel tongues, and had no love, I yould be as sounding copper...."

But the heart of the old Apostle was touched by that soul in torture, which, like a bird in a cage, grasped at the air and

(Sun; so he stretched his hands to Vinicius and said:

"Who knocks to Him, it will be opened, and the Lord's grace is upon thee; I bless thee, thy soul and thy

love in the name of the Saviour of the world.

Vinicius, who had spoken with ecstacy already, on hearing the blessing sprang to Peter, and then an extraordinary thing happened. That descendent of Quirites, who till recently did not recognize a foreigner as a human being, seized the hands of the old G alilean and began to press them with gratitude to his lips. And Peter rejoiced for he

understood that the sowing fell on fertile ground, and that his fishing net gathered one more soul.

Those present were not less rejoiced by this evident sign for the Apostle of God and exclaimed in one voice:

"Praise the Lord in the highest!" Vinicius rose with a brightened face and began to speak.

"I see that happiness can dwell among you, for I feel myself happy, and I think that you will also convince me in other things. But I will only tell you that this will not take place in Rome; Caesar is going to Ancium and I must go with him for I have such an order. You know that not to obey is death. But if I have found favor in your eyes, go with me that you may teach me your truth. It will be safer for you there than for myself. In that great throng of people you will be able to relate your truth ip the very court of Caesar. It is said that Acte is a Christian, and there are also Christians among the pretorians for I myself saw the soldiers kneeling before thee, Peter, at the Nomentan gate. In Ancium I have a villa in which we will assemble to hear your teachings at Nero's very side. Glaucus told me that you are ready to -wander to the borders of the world for one soul, so do for me what you have done for those for whom you came here from Judea—do this and don't for sake

Hearing this they began to deliberate together, thinking with joy of the victory of their teaching and of the importance with which the pagan world will receive the conversion of an Augustian and descendant of one of the oldest Roman families. They were indeed ready to wander to the borders of the world for one human soul, and since the death of the Saviour they have done nothing else, so that a negative answer did not even come into their minds. But at present Peter was the pastor of the whole community, therefore he could not go. Instead, Paul of Tarsus, who, not long before, was in Ancium and in Fregellae, and was again preparing for a long journey to the East to visit the churches there and envive them with a new spirit of ardor, agreed to accompany the young tribune to Ancium, for it would not be difficult for him to find a vessel there going to Grecian waters.

Vinicious, though grieved that Peter, to whom he was so much indebted, would not accompany him, thanked him

however with gratitude, and then turned to the old Apostle

with a last request:

"Knowing Lygia\*s dwelling," he said, "I could go myself to her and ask, which is a proper, thing, whether she wishes me as a husband if my soul will become Christian, but I prefer to ask thee, Apostle, to allow me to see her or to conduct me thyself to her. I do not know how long I will have to stay in Ancium, and remember that near Caesar no one is certain of his to-morrow.. Petronius also told me that it will not be very safe for me there. May I see her before I go; may I cast my eyes upon her, and may I ask her whether she will forget my wrong and share with me the good?"

Peter, the Apostle, smiled kindly and said:

" And who should refuse thee a just joy, my son?"

Vinicius bent again to the Apostle's hands, for he could not restrain his overflowing heart. Peter took him by the templesand said:

11 But do not fear Caesar, for I tell thee not a hair will

fall from thy head."

Then he sent Myriam for Lygia, asking her not to tell her whom she would find among them, so as to surprise her. It was not far away, so Myriam soon reappeared in the garden with Lygia. Vinicius wished to rush forth to meet her, but at the sight of that beloved figure happiness deprived him of strength, and he stood with a beating heart, breathless, scarcely being able to stand, a hundred times more moved than at the moment when, for the first time in his life, he heard the arrows of the Parthians whistling around his head. She ran in, not expecting anything, and at the sight of him she also stopped as if fixed to the ground. Her face flushed and then suddenly grew very pale, then she began to look amazed and at the same time frightened at those present. But around she saw glances full of kindness. Furthermore Peter, the Apostle, approached her and said:

"Lygia, dost thou love him yet?"

A moment of silence followed. Her lips began to tremble like those of a child who is about to weep, and who, feeling itself guilty, sees, however, that it is necessary to confess the guilt.

"Answer," said the Apostle.

Then, with humility, and with fear in her voice, she whispered, slipping to Peter's knees:

"Yes, Ido."

But in a moment Vinicius knelt beside her, and Peter, placing his hands on their heads, said:

"Love each other for the Lord and to His glory, for there

is no sin in your love."

#### CHAPTER XII.

Walking through the garden, Vinicius related his ardent love to her, which a moment ago he confessed to the Apostles; the disquiet of his soul, the changes which had taken place in him, and finally the immense longing which had veiled his life from the time he left Myriam's house. He confessed to Lygia that he wished to forget her, but he could not. He thought for whole days and nights of her. That little cross made of boxwood twigs which she gave to him, and which he placed in the lararium and involuntarily worshipped as something divine, reminded him of her. And he was longing more and more for her, for love was stronger than he, and possessed his soul from the time he first saw her in the. the house of Aulus. For others, the Parcas's weave the thread of life; but for him, love, longing and sadness wove it. His deeds were bad, but they originated from love. He loved her in the house of Aulus, and on the Palatine, and when he saw her in Ostrianum, listening to Peter's words; when he. went with Croton to capture her; when she watched' at his bedside, and when she left him. Then came Chilo, who discovered her abode and advised him to capture her but he preferred to punish Chilo, and go to the Apostles to beg for truth and for her. And may that moment be blessed in which such thought came to his mind; for now he was near her, and she will not flee from him any more as she did the last time from Myriam's dwelling?

"I do not flee from thee "—said Lygia. "Therefore, why has thou done this?"

She, bending her. flushed face, answered:

"Thou knowest.". Minicius was silent for a moment, from excess of happiness, and then again began to speak; how he was becoming aware that she was entirely different from Roman women, and probably similar to Pomponia

alone. He did not know how to tell her clearly, for he himself could not account for what he felt, that in her comes to the world an entirely different beauty, which had not existed hitherto, and which was not a statue, but a soul. Instead he told her that which filled him with joy, that he loved her even for this, that she was fleeing from him, and that she would be sacred to him at his hearth. Then seeing her hand, he was unable to speak further, and could only look at her with ecstacy, as on a regained happiness of life, and repeated her name as if wishing to assure himself that he found her, and that he was near her.

**"0** Lygia! Lygia!"

Finally, he began to question her, as to what was taking place in her soul, and she confessed to him that she fell in love with him in the house of Aulus, and if he would have brought her back to them from the Palatine, she would have made a confession to them of her love, and would implore

them, to relent their anger against him.

"I swear to thee,"—said Vinicus—11 that it did not even enter my mind to take thee away from Aulus. Petronius will tell thee some day, that I told him then that I loved thee, and wished to marry thee. I told him, Let her anoint my treshhold with wolf fat, and let her take a place at my hearth! But he laughed at me and gave Csesar the idea to demand thee as hostage, and give thee to me.

'How many times in my grief have I cursed him, but may be the favorable fate would have it so, for otherwise I would not get acquainted with Christians, and would not have

understood thee,"....

"Beileve me Marcus," answered Lygia, "that it was Christ, who designedly led thee to Him." ....

Vinicius raised his head with a certain astonishment.

"True!" he answered with vivacity; "all this took such a marvelous turn, that seeking for thee I met Christians....

In Ostrianum I listened with amazement, for I never heard such words before. Also thou hast prayed for me."

"Yes," answered Lygia.

They passed near the summer arbor covered with thick ivy and approached the place where Ursus choked Croton and also injured Vinicius.

"Here," said the young man—"if not for thee I would

have perished."

"Do not remember that!" answered Lygia, "and do not

be angry at Ursus for it."

' 'Could I revenge myself on him for this, that he defended thee? If he had been a slave I would give him freedom immediately."

"If he had been a slave, Aulus would have freed him

long ago."

"Dost thou remember," said Vinicius, "that I wished to return thee to Aulus? But thon hast replied to me that Csesar might find that out and revenge himself on them. Now thou wilt be able to see them whenever thou wishest."

"Why Marcus?"

"I think thou wilt be able to see them safely when thou wilt be mine. Yes!.... For if Caesar, learning this, would ask what I have done with the hostage whom he confided to me, I will say:' I married her and she is going to visit Aulus at my will. He will not stay long in Ancium, for he wishes to go to Achaea, and even should he stay there I don't need to see him every day. When Paul of Tarsus will have taught me your truth, I will at once accept baptism, will return here and regain the friendship of Aulus, who in these days returns to the city, and there will not be any more hinderance, and I will take thee away and set thee at my hearth. O carissima! carissima!"

Saying this he stretched forth his hands as if taking the heavens as witness of his love, while Lygia, raising her

bright eyes to him, said:

'And then I will say, Where thou art Cajus, there am I

Caja."

"Lygia!" exclaimed Vinicius, "I swear to thee, that no woman was ever so honored in the house of her husband as thou wilt be in mine."

For a while they walked in silence, unable to realize their happinees, enamoured in each other, similar to two divinities, as if the spring had produced them to the world together with flowers.

Finally they stopped under a cypress growing near the entrance of the dwelling. Lygia leaned on its trunk, and Vinicius began to entreat her anew with trembling voice:

"Order Ursus to go to the house of Aulus and take thy furniture and childish playthings and let him bring them to

me."

# She, blushing like a rose, answered:

"The custom demands otherwise."

"I know, usually the matron brings them only after the bride enters the house, but do this for me. I will take them to my villa, in Ancuim and they will remind me of thee."

Here he folded his hands and began to repeat like a child

which entreats:

<sup>1</sup> 'Pomponia will return in a few days, so do this, diva, do carissima mia!"

"Let Pomponia do as she pleases," answered Lygiablush-

ing still more at the recollection of the matron.

And again they ceased to speak for love began to deprive them of breath. Lygia stood leaning her back against the cypress, with her face whitening in the shade like a flower, with her eyes cast down and her bosom heaving, while Vinicius was growing pale. In the silence of noon they heard the beating of their hearts, and in their mutual ecstacy that cypress, the myrtle-shrubs and the ivy of the summer arbor changed for them into a garden of love. ButMyriam appeared in the door and invited them to dinner. They sat down amidst the apostles who looked at them with joy, as on a young generation which after their death was to preserve and continue to sow the seed of the new teaching. Peter was breaking and blessing bread; there was calmness on all the faces and a certain immense happiness seemed to fill the whole room.

"See," finally said Paul addressing Vinicius, "are we

enemies of life and joy?"

The young tribune answered:

'I know how it is for I never was so happy as among you."

#### CHAPTER XIII.

In the evening Vinicius, passing through the Forum, on returning home, noticed near the entrance to Vicus Tuscus, the gilded Jitter of Petronius, carried by eight Bithynians, and stopping them with a sign of his hand approached the curtains.

"May thou have a pleasant and blissful dream!" he

exclaimed at the sight of the sleeping Petronius.

"Oh, it is thee!" said Petronius starting from the sleep.
"Yes! I was taking a nap for I spent the night in the Palatine. Now I was going to buy something to read in Ancium. What is the news?"

' 'Thou art going around the book stores?" asked

Vinicius.

"Yes, I do not wish to bring disorder in my library, so I am making special supplies for the journey. I understand that new works of Mozonius and Seneca were issued. I am also seeking for Persius and a certain edition of eclogues of Virgil, which I have not read. Oh, how tired I am, and how my hands pain me from taking the rolls from the pegs.... When one is once in a book store the curiosity seizes him to see this and that book. I was in the bookstores of Avirnus, at Atractus on Argilentum, and before then at Vicus Sandalarius. By Castor 1 I am sleepy."

' 'Thou wert at the Palatine, and so I will ask thee what is the news. But knowest what? Send away the litter with the boxes of books and come with me. We will converse of

Ancium and of something else."

"Well," answered Petronius getting out of the litter, "Thou must know that the day after to-morrow we start to Ancium."

"Wherefrom should I know that?"

"In what world dost thou live? So I am the first to announce this news? Yes I be ready the day after to-morrow in the morning. Neither peas on olive oil nor a handker-chief around his neck helped any, and the Bronzebeard grew hoarse. In view of this there is no mention of delay. He curses Rome and its air by the foundation of the world, and he would be glad to level it to the ground or destroy it by fire, and is longing for the sea as soon as possible. He says that these odors which the wind carries from the narrow streets will drive him into the grave. To-day great offerings were sacrificed in all the temples to restore him his voice, and woe to Rome and especially to the Senate, if it is not soom restored."

<sup>11</sup> Then there would be no use to go to Achsea. "

"But does our divine Csesar possess only this one talent?" answered Petronius, laughing; "he would appear

in ths Olympian games, as a poet, with his fire of Troy, as a coachman, as a musician, as an a,thlete, even as a dancer and would take in any instance all the crowns destined forvictors. Dost thou know why that monkey grew hoarse? Yesterday he wanted to equal our Paris in dancing and he danced to us the adventure of Leda, during which he perspired and caught cold. He was wet and like an eel freshly taken from the water. He changed the masks one after another, wriggling like a spindle, waved his hands like a drunken sailor, and loathsomeness was seizing me from looking at that big stomach and those thin legs. Paris was teaching him for two weeks, but imagine to thyself the Ahenobarbus as a Leda, or as a god-swan. That is a swan! But he wishes to appear publicly with that pantomime at Ancium and then in Rome."

'The people were offended that he sang publicly, but to think that a Roman Caesar will appear as a dancer. No 1

this Rome will not stand I"

" My dear! Rome will stand everything, and the Senate will decree thanks to the father of the fatherland." And after awhile he added:

'And the gaping rabble is proud that Caesar is its jester." "Tell thyself, is it possible to declare one's self more?"

Petronius shrugged his shoulders.

"Thou livest at home and in thy meditations now of Lygia, now of the Christians, so that thou probably dost not know what happened a few days ago. Nero married Pythagoras publicly. He appeared as the bride. It would seem that it passed the measure of madness. Is it not true? And wilt thou believe it, he called the flamens and they came and married him solemnly. I was present at that! I can stand much, but still acknowledge that I thought that if gods exist, they should give some sign.... But Caesar does not believe in gods, and is right."

11 So he is in one person the highest priest, god, and an

atheist," said Vinicius.

Petronius began to laugh. ' 'True! That did not come to my mind, and in a combination which the world has not seen hitherto." Then stopping for a moment he said:

"But it is yet necessary to add that this highest priest who does not believe in gods, and this god who jeers at

them, fears them as an atheist."

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" The proof of this is in what happened in the tempie of Vesta."

11 What a world!"

' 'As the world, so is Caesar!"
'But this will not last long.".

Conversing that way they entered Vinicius' house, who called for the supper cheerfully, and then turning to Petronius, said:

"No, my dear, the world must regenerate."

"We will not regenerate it," answered Petronius, " if only for the reason that in the times of Nero man is like a butterfly: he lives in the sun of favor, but with the first cold wind he perishes ...even if he would not want. By the son of Maia! more than once I ask myself the question, By what miracle could such a Lucius Salurninus live ninety-three yehrs, to survive Tyberius, Caligula, Claudius?.... But this matters not. Wilt thou allow me to send thy litter for Eunice? My longing for sleep is over, and I wish to enjoy myself. Order a eithrist to come to the supper, and afterward we will speak of Ancium. It is necessary to think of that and especially of thee."

Vinicius gave the command to send for Eunice, but declared that he would not think of breaking his head over

the stay at Ancium.

'1 Others who do not know how to live otherwise than in the rays of Caesar's favor may break theirs. The world does not end in the Palatine, especially for those who have something else in their heart and soul."

And he spoke this so carelessly, with such an animation,

that Petronius was alarmed, so gazing at him, he said:

"What is taking place within thee?" Thou art to-day, as if yet carrying a gold bulla on thy neck.

"Iam happy," answered Vinicius. "I invited thee to

me especially to tell thee this."

"What happened to thee?"

'1 Something which I would not surrender for the Roman Empire."

Saying this he sat down, leaned his arm on the chair, with his head on his arm and began to speak, with a smiling countenance and merry eye.

"Dost thou remember when we were together in the house of Aulus Plautius, and there thou didst see the godlike girl, 280

whom thou hast thyself called dawn and spring? Dost thou remember that Psyche, that incomparable, that most beautiful of all maidens, and of your goddesses?"

Petronius looked at him with such an astonishment, as if

wishing to ascertain that his head was in order.

"In what manner dost thou speak?" he said at last; "it is evident, that I remember Lygia."

Vinicius said: I am her betrothed."

"What?" But Vinicius rose abruptly, and called the dispensator.

"Let the slaves appear here before me, to the last soul!

quick!"

"Thou art her bethrothed?"—repeated Petronius.

But, before he recovered from his astonishment ',he immense atrium of Vinicius, house swarmed with people. Panting old men ran in, men in the prime of life, women, lads and girls. Every moment the atrium was filling closer and closer; in the corridors, called fauces, voices were heard calling each other in various languages. At last all placed themselves in lines along the walls and columns, and then Vinicius, standing near the impluvium, turned to Demás, the freeman, and said:

'Those who have served in the house for twenty years, shall appear to-morrow before the pretor, where they will receive freedom; those who did not serve that long, will receive three > pieces of gold each, and a double ration for a week. A command shall be sent to the country ergastulum to remit punishment, to take off the chains from the people's feet and to feed them abundantly. Know that a happy day has come for me, and I wish that joy shall prevail at home."

They stood for a moment, as if not believing their own ears, then all hands were raised together; all the mouths

shouted:

"Ah! lotd! Ah!"

"To-morrow," said Vinicius, "I will order them to meet in the garden and to sketch such signs on the ground as they wish. Those who will draw a fish willbe freed by Lygia."

But Petronius asked:

"A fish? Oh! I remember what Chilo told me. This is the sign of the Christians."

Then he stretched forth his hand to Vinicius and said:

"The happiness is always there where the man sees it.

OUO VADIS.

May Flora strew flowers under your feet for many years, I wish thee everything that thou wishest thyself."

'Then I thank thee, for I thought that thou would disap-

prove my actions."

"I disapprove? Not in the least. On the contrary I

say thou acts rightly."

"Ha, traitor," answered Vinicius merrily, "hast thou forgotten what thou didst tell me once when we were going out of the house of Pomponia G-receina?"

But Petronius answered coolly:

'Yes, but I changed my opinion." And after a while he added: "My dear! Everything changes in Rome. The husbands change their wives, the wives change husbands, why shouldn't I change my opinion? It lacked not much for Nero to have married Acte, who was brought directly for him from a royal family. And what! He would have an honest wife and we an honest Augusta. By Proteus and his sea-deserts I will always change my opinion as often as I find it suitable or convenient. As to Lygia, her royal descent is more certain than the ancestors of Acte. But be on the lookout at Ancium against Popptea, who is revengeful."

"I don't even think of that! Not a hair will fall from

my head in Ancium."

"If thou thinkest to astonish me again, then thou art mistaken, but whence hast thou that certainty?".

"Peter the Apostle told me this."

"Ah! Peter the Apostle told thee this! There is no argument against that; but allow, however, that I shall undertake certain measures of precaution, if only for this, that Peter the Apostle should not prove a false prophet, for if by any occurrence he would be mistaken, he could loose thy confidence, which probably will be useful for him in the future."

' 'Do what thou wishest, but I believe him. And if thou believest to dishearten me to him, then thou art mistaken.."

"Well, then one more question: Hast thou become a

Christian already?"

"Not now, but Paul from Tarsus comes with me to explain the teaching of Christ, and afterward I will be baptized, for what thou hast told me that they are enemies of life and joy is not true."

"The better for thee and for Lygia," answered Petronius.

Then shrugging his shoulders, said as if to himself:

"It is, however, an astonishing thing how these people know how to gain confessions, and how that sect increases."

And Vinicius answered with such a vehemence as if he

had also been baptized:

"Yes! thousands and tens of thousands are in Rome, in the cities of Italy, Greece and Asia. There are Christians among the legions and among pretorians; they are in the very palace of Caesar. This teaching is confessed by slaves, and citizens, poor and rich, plebeian and patrician. Dost thou know that some of the Cornelii are Christians, that Pomponia Grsecina is a Christrian, that it is said that Octavia was, and Acte is? Yes, that teaching is embracing the world and it alone is £ble to regenerate it. Do not shrug thy shoulders, for who knows whether in a month or

year thou wilt not accept it'thyself."

"I?" said Petronius, "no, by the son of Leta! I will not accept it even if divine and human wisdom is contained in it.... This would demand'pains-and I don't like to be troubled. That would demand renunciation and I don't like to renounce anything in life. With thy nature similar to fire and seething water, something like this could have happened at any time, but I! I have my gems, my cameos, my vases, and my Eunice. I do not believe in Olympus, but I am establishing it for myself on earth, and I will bloom until the arrows of the divine archer pierce me, or till Ceesar will command me to open my veins. I love the odor of violets and a comfortable triclinium too much. I lovel even our gods.... as rhetoric figures—and Achaea, where I am preparing to go with our corpulent, thin-legged, unequalled, divine Caesar, Augustus, Peryodonices, Hercules, Nero!....

Saying this he grew joyful at the very supposition that he might accept the teaching of the Galilean fisherman, and began to sing in a undertone:

"In. myrtle-green I will entwine my bright sword, After the trail of Harmodyos and Aristogiton.",

But he was interrupted, for the usher had anounced that Eunice had arrived.

Immediately after her coming supper was served, during which after several songs were sung by the cithrist. Vinicius related to Petronius of Chilo's visit, and how this-

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visit gave him the idea of going directly to the Apostles, which idea came to him while Chilo was flogged.

To this Petronius, who was again overcome by drowsiness,

placed his hand to his forehead and said:

"The idea was good, if the result was good. But as to 'Chilo, I would have ordered to give him five pieces of gold, but as thou hast ordered to flog him, then it would be better to flog him to death, for who knows if in time senators major not bow to him as they bow to-day to our knight, shoemaker, Vatinius. Good night."

And taking oil the wreathes, Petronius together with Eunice prepared to go home. After they left, Vinicius

•went to his library and wrote to Lygia as follows:

"I wish that when thou wilt open thy beautiful eyes, 0 god-like 1 this letter should tell thee good day! Therefore, I write to-day, though I will see thee to-morrow. Caesar goes the day after to-morrow to Ancium, and I, alas! must accompany him. I told thee already that not to obey would be to expose my life, and I would not now have the courage to die. But if thou dost not wish it, answer me with one word and I will remain, and let it be Petronius' affair to turn away the danger from me. To-day, in the time of joy, I distributed rewards to all my slaves, and those who served in the house twenty years I shall bring to the pretor to-morrow, to be freed. Thou, dear, ought to praise me for this for it seems me that it will agree with that sweet teaching which thou confessest, and secondly I have done this for thee. I will tell them to-morrow that they owe their freedom to thee, that they should be grateful to thee and glorify 1i'iy name. Instead, I give myself in the slavery of happiness to thee, and would I might never see an enfranchise, ment. May Ancium and the travels of Ahenobarbus be cursed. I am thrice, four times as happy that I am not as wise as Petronius, for I would probably be obliged to go to Acluea. Whenever 1 will be able to tear myself away, I will mount a horse and rush to Rome to please my eyes with the sight of thee. Whenever I will be unable I will dispatch a slave with a letter of inquiry to thee. 1 greet thee, divine one, and embrace thy feet. Do not be angry that I call thee divine. If thou wilt forbid, I shall obey, but to-day I do not know otherwise. I greet thee from thy future house with ®.ll my soul. "

#### CHAPTER XIV.

It was known in Rome that Ceesar wished to visit Ostia, **on** the way to see the largest ship in the world, which had recently brought corn from Alexandria, and from there by the shore road, he would go to Ancium. The orders were given a few days previous, therefore, at Porta Ostiensis, and from early morning crowds composed of the local rabble and all nations of the world were assembling to satiate their eyes with the sight of the imperial retinue, on which the Roman plebeians could never gaze . sufficiently. The road to Anciumwas neither difficult nor long, and the city itself, was composed of magnificently arranged palaces and villas; it was possible to find everything demanded by comfort, and even the most exquisite luxury of that time. Caesar, however, had the habit of taking with him all objects in which he took delight, beginning with musical instruments and household furniture, and ending with statues and mosaics, which were laid in order, even when he wished to stop only a short while, either for rest or refreshments. For that reason, • whole legions of servants accompanied him, not counting the pretorian detachments and the Augustians, of whom everyone had a separate retinue of slaves. In the early morning of that day, herdsmen from Campania, dressed in goat-skins, and with sunburnt faces, drove five hundred she-asses, so that Poppsea, on her arrival next morning in Ancium, could have her usual bath in their milk. The gaping crowd gazed with laughter and satisfaction on the long ears of the herd, swinging itself amid clouds of dust, and listened with delight to the whistling of whips and wild shouts of the herdsmen. After the asses passed, swarms of servants rushed out into the road, and having cleaned it carefully, began to strew flowers and needles of pine trees.

In the crowds it was repeated to each other with a certain feeling of proudness, that the whole way up to Ancium was to be strewn with flowers, taken from private gardens of the environs, and even bought for a high price from huckster at the Porta Mugionis. In proportion to the hours of

the morning, the throng increased every moment.

Some brought with them whole families, and lest the time should not seem to them too long, they spread 'Stores of pro-

visions on the stones intended for the new temple of Cerera, and ate pranduim under the open sky. Here and there groups gathered, in which the lead was taken by men who traveled a great deal; they discussed Cmsar's departure, his future travels, travels in general, and the sailors and veteran soldiers narrated wonders of the countries which they heard during distant campaigns, countries upon which a Roman foot had never touched.

The townsmen,' who were never farther than the Appian Way, were listening with amazement to the wonders of India and Arabia, of the archipelagos surrounding Britain, where on a certain small island Briarius imprisoned the slumbering Saturn, and where spirits dwelled; of hiperborean lands, of stiffened seas, of the hissing and roar made by the water of the ocean, in the moment the setting sun plunged in the bot-

tomless depth.

'Such stories easily found belief among the rabble, stories believed even by such men as Plinius and Tacitus. It was also spoken of the new ship which was to be looked at by Caesar, a ship which carries wheat to last for two years, not counting four hundred travelers, likewise as many in the crew, and a multitude of wild animals which were to be used during the time of the summer games. This gained the universal inclination toward Caesar, who not only nourished but amused the populace. Thence all were preparing for a greeting full of enthusiasm. Meanwhile appeared a detachment of Numidian riders; belonging to the pretorian troops. They were dressed in yellow garments, red girdles and big earrings throwing a golden reflection on their black faces. The points of their bamboo spears shone in the sun like flames. After they passed, a march similar to a procession passed. The throngs crowded in order to look at it •closer, but detachments of foot-pretorians arrived and placing themselves on both sides of the gate, prevented the access to the road. Then passed the wagons, carrying tents of purple, red and violet, and tents • white as snow, interwoven with gold threads, and Oriental carpets, citrus tables, pieces of mosaics, kitchen utensils, cages filled with birds from the East, South and West, birds of which the brains or tongues were to be prepared for Caesar's table, amphores with wine and baskets with fruits. But objects which they did not wish to expose to bending or bruising 286 OUO VADIS.

on the wagons were carried by slaves on foot. Therefore hundreds of people were seen carrying vessels and statuettes of Corinthian copper. There were special slaves to carry Etruscan vases, special for Greek, special for gold and silver vessels and Alexandrian glass. They were separated by small detachments of foot and horse pretorians, and over each band of slaves were overseers armed with whips, the ends of which had pieces of lead and iron instead of a lash. The march, composed of men bearing with importance various objects, looked like some solemn religious procession, and the likeness became still more distinct when musical instruments of Caasar and the court were borne past. There were

seen harps, Greek lutes, Hebrew and Egyptian lutes, lyres, formingos, cithras, fifes, trumpets and cymbals. Looking at this sea of instruments gleaning with gold, bronze, precious stones and mother-of-pearl, one might suppose that Apollo or Bacchus went out for a journey around the world. Afterwards appeared magnificent chariots full of acrobats, dancers, male and female, picturesquely grouped with wands in their hands. Behind them rode slaves intended not for service but for profusion; little boys and girls selected from all Greece and Asia Minor, with long hair or winding curls bound in golden nets similar to Amors, with wonderful faces, but covered entirelj' with a thick layer of cosmetics, lest the wind of Campana might burn their delicate complexions.

And again followed a pretorian detachment of gigantic bearded Sicambrians, with blue eyes and light haired. Before them were carried Roman eagles by banner-bearers called imaginarii; tablet inscriptions, statuettes of German and Roman gods, and finally statuettes and busts of Caesar.

From under the. cloaks and cuirasses of the soldiers appeared their strong and sunburnt arms, like war machines, capable of using the heavy weapons with which guards of that kind were armed. The earth seemed to bend under their heavy step, and they, as if conscious of the force which they could use against the Caesars themselves, looked with contempt at thy street rabble, evidently forgetting that many of them came to that city in chains. But there was only an insignificant handful of them, for the main pretorian forces remained in camps in order to watch over the city and keep it within bounds. When they passed, Nero's draught tigers and lions appeared so that if the fancy occurred to him to

imitate Dyonisus, he would have something to hitch to his chariots. Hindoos and Arabs led them with steel chains by a noose, but so wrapped with flowers that the chains seemed to be entirely wreathed. The animals, tamed by skilled bestiarii, looked at the crowds with their green, sleepy eyes; at times raising their gigantic heads, they drew wheezingly through their nostrils the human exhalation of the crowds, licking their jaws with sharp-pointed tongues. Now came the imperial wagons and lifters, large and small, golden or purple, inlaid with ivory, pearls, or glittering with the flashes of jewels; behind them a small detachment of pretorians in Roman armors, composed entirely of Italian volunteer soldiers. Then crowds of the quaint slavish servility and boys and finally Caesar himself, whose approach was announced from the distance by the shouting of the crowds.

In the throng was Peter the Apostle, who wished to see Caesar once in his life. He was accompanied by Lygia, who had her face hidden under a thick veil, and Ursus, whose strength composed the most certain protection amidst the unruly and dissolute crowds. The Lygian seized one of the rocks intended for the building of a temple, and brought it to the Apostle, so that he, stepping upon it, might see better than the others. The throng began to murmur, for Ursus shoved them aside like a vessel shoves the waves, but when he alone lifted a stone which four of the strongest athletes

he alone lifted a stone which four of the strongest athletes of the people would be unable to move, the muttering changed into admiration, and cries of Macte! were heard.

Meanwhile Caesar appeared. He was sitting on a wagon shaped like a tent, drawn by six white Idumian stallions, shod with gold. The wagon had the shape of a tent with purposely opened sides, so that the crowds would be able to see him. Several persons might have found place there, but Nero wishing that the attention should be fixed exclusively on him, rode through the city alone, having only two deformed dwarfs at his feet. He was dressed in a white tunic and an amethyst colored toga, which cast a livid lustre ou his face. On his head he had a laurel wreath. Since his departure to Neapolis, his face had become bloated; under the lower jaw hung a double chin, by which his mouth, always too near his nose, now seemed to be just under the nostrils. His big neck was as usual wrapped by a silk handkerchief, which he arranged every few moments with his fat white hand, covered

with red hair. Measurless vanity was as usual depicted on. his face; also, fatigue and tediousness. Altogether it was a terrible and farcical face.

While riding he turned to both sides, half closing his eyes, and watching diligently how he was greeted. He was greeted by a storm of applause and the shouts: "Hail! divine Caesar, imperator; hail! conquering, hail! incomparable, son of Apollo—Apollo, himself!"

Listening to these words, he smiled, but at times as if a cloud passed over his face, for the Roman rabble, confiding in its number, allowed itself to make jeering taunts, even towards great triumphators, and those whom it really loved

and respected.

Was it not known that it once shouted at Julius Caesar, upon his entrance to Rome—

11 Citizens, hide your wives, for the bald-headed libertine

is coming!"

But the monstrous self-love of Nero could not stand the least blame nor taunts. Meanwhile, in the throng, amidst praising shouts were heard the cries: "Copperbeard!.... Copperbeard!.... Where dost thou cart thy flaming beard?"

"Dost thou fear that Rome might burn up from it?"

And those who cried thus, did not know that their jest concealed in itself a terrible prophecy. It was not these voices that angered Caesar so much; he did not wear the beard, having previously offered it in a goldon box to Jovis Capitolinus. But others hidden behind piles of stones, and near the angle of the temple cried out: "Matricida! Nerol Orestes, Alkmeon," and still others, "Where is Octavia?" "Give back the purple," and at Poppma, who rode just behind him, they cried: "Flava coma," by which name they indicated women pavement beaters.

The musical ear of Nero was also catching these shouts, and he raised his polished emerald to his eyes, as if wishing to see and remember those who uttered them. And so his glance rested on the Apostle standing on the stone. For a moment those two men looked at each other, and to no one, from that magnificient retinue, or from those innumerable crowds, came to mind that in that instant, two rulers of the earth looked at each other, from which one will in a short time • vanish as a bloody dream, while the other, that

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old man, dressed in a rude lacerna, will take eternal possession of the world and the city.

Meanwhile Ceesar rode by, and close behind him eight Africans bore a magnificent litter in which sat Poppsea, so much hated by the people. Dressed as was Nero, in a garment of amethyst color, with a thick layer of cosmetic on her face, immovable and thoughtful, she looked like some divinity, at the same time beautiful and vile. After her followed a whole court of male and female servants, also lines of wagons with utensils for comfort and dressing. The sun was already sinking from midday when the passing of the Augustians began, a resplendent march, glittering, changing like a serpent, and endless. The idle Petronius, greeted with good wishes by the throngs, ordered that he be borne with his goddess-like slave in an open litter. Tygellinus rode in a chariot drawn by ponies adorned with white and purple feathers. He was seen to rise in the chariot and stretch his neck, waiting for Caesar to give him a sign to get into his chariot. Among others the crowds greeted Licianus Pison with applause, Vitelius with laughter, and Vatinius with whistling. Toward Licinius and Lecanius, the consuls, they were indifferent, but Tylius Senecio, who was liked, not knowing why, equally shared with Vestinius the applause of the rabble. The court was in-numerable. It .seemed that everything which was richest, most magnificent or most notable in Rome was immigrating to Ancium. Nero never traveled otherwise than with a thousand vehicles. The number accompanying him nearly always exceeded 12,000, the number of soldiers in the legion. Hence Domicius Afer was seen; also, the decrepit Lucius Saturninus; and Vespasian, who had not yet gone on his expedition against Judea, from which he returned for the imperial crown; and his sons, Nerva and Lucan, and Annius Galo, and Quintianus, and a multitude of women renowned for their riches, beauty, luxury and profligacy. The eyes of the rabble were passing from known faces to the harness, wagons, horses, curious attires of the servility, composed of all the nations of the world. In that flood of splendor and grandeur it was impossible to know at what to look, and not only eyes but also the thoughts were dazzled by the golden glare from these colors of purple and violet, from the glittering of precious stones, brocades, mother of pearl and

ivory. It seemed as if all the rays of the sun were scattered in that magnificent abyss. And though amid the rabble there was no lack of beggars with sunken stomachs and hunger in their eyes, still that spectacle inflamed them not only with the desire to enjoy but at the same time with delight and pride because it gave the feeling of that power and indestructiveness of Rome, to which the world contributed and before which the world knelt. And indeed there was nobody in the whole world who would dare to think that that power would not last through all the centuries, that it would not outlive all the nations and that there was nothing on the earth that would resist it.

Vinicius, riding at the end of the retinue, upon seeing the Apostle and Lygia, whom he did not expect to see, jumped out of his chariot and greeting them with a radiant face began to speak with a hastened voice like a man who has not

any time to spare:

O Lygia!.... God could not have sent me a better omen. I greet thee again while taking farewell, but I do not take farewell for a very long time. I shall provide horses to relieve others on the road, and in every free day I will think of thee till I get leave to return. Farewell."

" Farewell, Marcus," and then she added lower: "May

Christ lead thee and open thy soul to the words of Paul."

He was glad in his heart that she was concerned that he

should soon become a Christian, so he answered:

"Ocelle mi! May it happen so as thou sayest. Paul prefers to travel among my people, but he is with me, and will be my master and companion....Remove thy veil, O my joy, so that I may see thee once more before the journey. Why didst thou veil thee thus?"

She raised the veil with her hand and showed him her

bright face and wonderful, smiling eyes, asking:

"Is it bad thus?"

And her smile had in it a little of girlish malice, but Vinicius looking at hen anxiously answered:

"It is bad for my eyes, which would gaze on thee till death."

Then he turned to Ursus and said:

"Ursus, guard her as the apple of thy eye, for she is not only thine but also mine 1"

Saying this he seized her hand and pressed his lips on it, to the great amazement of the gaping crowd which could not understand the sign of such honor from a brilliant Augustian towards a girl dressed in simple, almost slavish, garments.

"Farewell."

Then he left quickly, for the retinue had gone by. Apostle Peter made imperceptibly a sign of cross over him, and the good Ursus began at once to praise him, glad that the young mistress listened eagerly and looked at him with gratitude.

The retinue was getting away, hiding itself behind clouds of golden dust, but they gazed long in his trail, till Demás, the miller for whom Ursus worked for at night, came up. Kissing the hand of the Apostle he requested him to enter his house for refreshments, saying that he lived near the Emporium; that they must be hungry and tired, having

spent the greater part of the day near the gate.

So they went, and after rest and refreshments in his house, returned to the Trans-Tiber in the evening. Having the intentions to cross the river by the Emilius bridge, they went through Clivus Publicus, going over the Aventine hill, between the temples of Diana and Mercury. Apostle Peteilooked from the height at the edifices surrounding and at those vanishing in the distance, and sunk in silence, he meditated over the immensity and power of that city to which he

came to preach the word of God.

Hitherto he had seen the Roman rule and legions in various countries through which he wandered, but they were single limbs of that power, the personification pf which he saw today in the form of Caesar. That city, immense, rapacious, gready, dissolute, and rotten to the marrow of the bones, and at the same time immovable in its superhuman strength; that Caesar, a murderer of his brother, of his mother, of his wife, behind whom dragged a retinue of bloody phantoms not less in number than his court; that profligate, that jester, and at the same time master of thirty legions, and through them of the whole world; those courtiers covered with gold and scarlet, uncertain of the morrow, and at the same time more powerful than kings; all this taken together, seemed to him a kind of a hellish kingdom of evil and wrong. And he wondered in his simple heart how God can give such an inconceivable omnipotence to Satan, and how 292

He can give him the earth, to knead, to overturn, to trample, to squeeze tears and blood from, to disturb like a whirlwind, to burn like a flame. And from those thoughts his heart became alarmed, and he began to speak in spirit to the Master:

"0, Lord, where will I begin in this city to which Thou hast sent me? To it belongs the seas, the lands, the beasts on the earth, and the creatures of the water; to it belongs other kingdoms and towns and thirty legions which guard them; but I, 0 Lord, am a fisherman from a lake 1 Where will I begin? And how will I conquer its malice?"

Thus speaking he was raising his gray, trembling head to Heaven, praying and calling from the depth of his heart to his Divine Master, full of sorrow and fear. Suddenly his

prayer was interrupted by the voice of Lygia, who said:

The whole city is as if on fire".... And in fact, the sun was setting marvelously that day. Its immense shield had sunk half way behind the Janiculum hill, while the whole expanse of the sky filled with red gleam. From the place in which they stood, their sight embraced a considerable expanse. Somewhat to the right they saw the extending walls of the Circus Maximus, over it the hovering palaces of the Palatine, and straight before them, behind the Forum Boarum and Velabrum, the summit of the Capitol with the temple of Jove. But the walls, columns and summits of the temples were as if plunged in that golden and purple gleam. The parts of the river visible from the distance flowed as if with blood, and in the proportion, as the sun was sinking behind the hill, the gleam became redder and redder, more and more similar to a blaze, and grew and widened till at last it embraced the seven hills, from which it seemed to flpw down on. the whole environs.

"The whole city is as if on fire," repeated Lygia. And Peter shaded his eyes with his hands, and said:

"The wrath of God is upon it."

## CHAPTER XV.

Vinicius to Lygia:

The slave Phlegon, by whom I send this letter, is a

Christian, therefore he will be one of those who will receive their freedom from thy hands, my dearest. He is an old servant of our house, hence I will write with full confidence and without fear that this letter will fall into other hands than thine. I write from Laurentum where we Stopped on account of heat. Otto once owned a magnificent villa herewhich he presented to Poppasa, and she, though divorced from him, thought it proper to keep the beautiful present. When I think of those women which surround me now, and of thee, it seems to me from the stones of Deucalion there must have risen various kinds of people, altogether unlike each other, and that thou belongest to one born from crystal. I admire and love thee with all my soul, so that I would wish to speak only of thee, and I must force myself to write of the journey, of that which happens to me, and of news of the court.

Caesar was the guest of Poppaea, who in secret prepared a magnificent reception. She invited but a few Augustians, but Petronius and I were among the invited. After the noonday meal we sailed in golden boats, over a sea which wae quiet as if it slumbered, and blue as thy eyes, O god-like! We rowed ourselves, and it flattered Augusta that consular men or their sons were rowing her boat. Caesar, standing at the rudder, in a purple toga, sang a song in honor of the sea, which he had composed the previous night and to which he composed music together with Diodorus. In other boats accompanied by slaves from India who played on sea-shells, and round about appeared numerous dolphins, as if really enticed by music from the depths of the sea. And dostthou know what I have done? I thought and yearned for thee and wished to take the sea, that fine weather and music, and give everything to thee. Dost thou wish, my Augusta, that some day we Should live near the sea-shore, away from Dome? I have land in Sicily, on which there is a forest which blossoms like roses in the spring, and on which the trees grow so near to the sea, that the branches nearly touch the water. There I will love thee and adore the teachings of Paul, for I know that it does not oppose either love or happiness. Dost thou wish? But before I will hear an answer from thy beloved lips I write thee further what, happened in the boat. Soon the shore was left far behind; and we saw a sail before us in the distance. Immediately &

dispute arose whether it was a common fisherman's boat or a great vessel from Ostia. I was the first to recognize it, and then Augusta said that there was evidently nothing hidden from my eyes, and suddenly lowering the veil from her face, asked me if I would be able to recognize her thus. Petronius at once answered that it was impossible to see even the sun behind a cloud; but she said laughingly that only love alone could blind such a sharp look, and mentioning various Augustian women she began to enquire and guess with whom I was in love. I was answering calmly, but finally she mentioned thy name. Speaking of thee she unveiled her face again, and began looking at me with evil and at the same time inquiring eyes. I feel true gratitude toward Petronius, who in that moment nearly tipped over the boat, through which the general attention was turned away from me, for if I would have heard unwilling or sarcastic words of thöe, I would be unable to hide my anger and would have hadzto struggle with the desire to keep from breaking the head of that perverse and malicious woman with an oar. Thou dost remember what I told thee on the eve of the departure in the house of Linus of the incident on the pond of Agrippa. Petronius is afraid on my account, and only to-day implored me that I should not harm the vanity of Augusta. But Petronius understands me no more, nor does he know that apart from thee there is neither delight, beauty, nor love, and for Poppea I have only disgust and contempt. Thou hast greatly changed mj' soul—in fact so far that I would be unable to return to the former life. But do not fear that something evil may happen to me here. Poppsea does not love me, for she is unable to love anybody, and her whims arise only from her anger of Caesar, who is still under her influence and who even may love her; but nevertheless he spares her no more, and does not hide from her his shamelessness and his transgressions. Besides, I will tell thee something else which ought to pacify thee: Peter told me before the departure that I should not fear Caesar, for not a hair will fall from my head, and I believe him. Some voice says in my soul that his word must be fulfilled, and since he blessed our love, neither Caesar, nor all the powers of Hades, nor even predestination itself will be able, to take thee away from me, O Lygia! When I think of this, am as happy as if I was in Heaven, which alone is happy

and peaceful. But perhaps what I say of Heaven and predestination offends thee, a Christian? In that case pardon me, for I sin unwittingly. Baptism has not washed me yet, but my heart is as if an empty goblet which Paul of Tarsus will fill with your sweet teaching, the sweeter to me that it is thine. May I find favor in thy eyes. My days and nights in Ancium will pass in listening to Paul. The first day of the journey he gained such an influence over the people, that they surround him continually, seeing in him not only the wonder-maker but also a supernatural person. Yesterday I saw joy on his face; when I asked him what he was doing, he answerd:

'I am sowing."

Petronius knows that he is among my people and wishes to see him, as does Seneca who has heard of him from Gallo. But the stars are growing paler, 0 Lygia, and the morning stars are shining brighter. Soon the dawn will make the sea rosy; everything around is sleeping. I am only thinking of thee, and love thee. I salute thee as well as the morning dawn, 0 my divinity!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

Vinicius-to Lygia:

Wert thou, my dear, ever with the Auluses in Ancuim?'

Already from Laurentum, the villas extend along the shore one after another, and Ancium itself is an endless row of palaces and porticos, whose columns reflect in the water.

I too, have a residence here, close to the water, with an olive grove and and a forest of cypress behind the villa, and; when I think that this residence will one day become thine, its marbles seem whiter to me, the gardens more shady, and the, sea more azure. Oh Lygia, how good it is, to love!

The old Menikles, who manages the villa here, has planted under the myrtles, whole bushes of irises. These irises will remind thee of thy home, and therefore I am certain that thou wilt love Ancium and that villa. Immediately after our arrival we conversed with Paul at the noonday meal. We spoke of thee. Afterward he began to teach me. I listened for a long time, and will only tell thee that even if I had the

pen of a Petronius, still I would be unable to describe all which passed through my mind and soul. I did not suppose there could be in the world such happiness and peace. But I keep all this for conversation with thee, when at the first free moment I will go to Rome. Tell me, how can the world find room for such men as Peter the Apostle, Paul of Tarsus and Csesar at the same time? I ask, because the evening after the teaching of Paul I passed with Nero, and dost thou know what I heard there? First, he read his poem of the destruction of Troy, and he began to complain that he never saw a burning city. I-Ie envied Priam and called him a happy man just because he had seen a conflagration and the ruin of his native city. To this Tygellinus said: "Say a word, 0 divine one, and I will take a torch, and before the night passes thou wilt see the blazing Ancium." But Caesar •called him a fool. "Where," said he, "would I go to breathe the sea air and preserve this voice which the gods have given me, and which I have to take great care of for the good of mankind? To it, not Rome that injures me; is it not the sultry exhalation from the Sabura and the Esquiline which cause me hoarseness, and would not the burning of Rome present a hundredfold more magnificent and tragic spectacle than Ancium?" Here, all began to speak of what an unheard of tragedy this would be-the sight of a city which subdued the world now changed into a pile of gray ashes. Caesar declared that his poem would surpass the songs of Homer, and afterward began to describe how he would rerebuild the city, and how the coming ages would have to admire his work, in the presence of which all other human works would dwindle. Then the drunken banqueters began to exclaim: "Do that! Do!" But he said: "I should have .more faithful and more devoted friends." I confess that when I heard this I became alarmed at once, for thou art in Rome. Now, I laugh at that fear, and believe that Caesar and the Augustians, though mad, would not dare to commit such a crime. But see how love unnerves a man. However I would prefer that the house of Linus would not stand on the narrow alley of the Trans-Tiber and in a neighborhood inhabited by f oreign people, who would be less considered in such a case. For me, even the very palaces of Palatine would not be a residence worthy of thee, therefore I should, also wish that none of these ornaments and comforts to

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which thou art accustomed from thy childhood were lacking to thee.

Go to the house of Anlus, my Lygia. I have thoughtmuch of this matter. If Caesar was in Rome, the news of
thy return might reach the Palatine through the slaves, turn
the attention to thee, and incur persecution for daring toact against the will of Caesar. But he will not remain long
in Ancium, and before he will return the slaves will have
ceased to speak of this. Linus and Ursus can dwell with
thee. Besides, I live with the hope that before the Palatine
will see Caesar, thou, my divine one, will live already in thy
own house on Carinae. Blessed be the day, hour and moment in which thou will cross my threshhold, and if Christ,
in whom I am learning to confess, will effect this, may His
name be blessed. I will serve Him and will give for Him
my life and blood. I speak wrong: we will both serve Him.
while the thread of our lives exist. I love, and greet thee,
with my whole soul.

### CHAPTER XVII.

Meanwhile in Ancium Petronius gained new victories^ every day over the Augustians who were vieing with him for-Cæsar's favor, The influence of Tygellinus had fallen completely. In Rome, when it was necessary to set aside people who seemed to be dangerous, to plunder their property, to settle public affairs, to give spectacles amazing for splen-dor and bad taste, or finally, to satisfy the monstrous desires of Cæsar, Tygellinus, equally cunning as he was ready, showed himself indispensable. But in Ancium, among the palaces reflecting in the azure of the sea, Cæsar was living a Hellenic life. From morning till evening poems were read, their structure and proficiency was discussed; one became enraptured with the many pleasures. Music and the theater —in one word, everything that the Greek genius had discovered with which to embellish life. But in such conditions Petronius, incomparably more educated than Tygellinus and other Augustians, eloquent, full of subtle fe.elings and taste, must have gained preponderance. Cæsar sought his company, asked for advice when he himself composed, and:

showed a more lively friendship than ever. It seemed to the Augustians that his influence finally gained a definitive victory, that the friendship between Caesar and him had become so intimate that it would last for years. Even those who formerly showed dislike to the quaint epicurean now began to surround him and vie for his favors. More than one was sincerely glad that such a man gained favor, who, knowing how to act, accepted with a sceptic smile the flattery of his enemies of yesterday, but who either through idleness or exquisiteness was not revengeful and did not use his power for the ruin or harm of others. There were moments when he was able to destroy Tygellinus, but he preferred to ridicule him and expose his coarseness and lack of education. The Senate in Rome again breathed freely, for no death sentence had been issued during the last month and a half. It is true that in Ancium and in the city itself wonders were heard of the refineness to which the profligacy of Caesar and his favorite reached; every one, however, preferred to have over himself a refined Caesar than one bestialized in the hands of Tygellinus. Tygellinus himself was losing his head and hesitated whether or not to acknowledge himself beaten, for Caesar intimated that in Rome and in the whole court there were only two souls capable of understanding each other, and two real Hellenes, himself and Petronius.

The astounding dexterity of the latter confirmed the people that his influence would outlast all others. They did not even think how Caesar could dispense with him, to whom he could converse of poetry, music, races, and in whose eyes he would look as if wishing to ascertain whether that which he composed was really perfect. But Petronius, with his habitual indifference, seemed not to attach any importance to his position. He was careless, slothful, witty and sceptic. Oftentimes he produced on people the impression of a man who scoffed at them, at himself, at Caesar and at the whole world. At times he dared to criticize Caesar to his face, and when others thought that he was going too far, or simply prepared his ruin, he knew how to correct the criticism in such a way that it came out to his advantage, and in those present aroused astonishment and the conviction that there was no situation out of which he would not come triumphant.

About a week after the return of Vinicins from Rome, Caesar was reading in a small circle a paragraph from his Troica, and when he finished and the shouts of ecstacy had passed, Petronius, asked by a look of Csesar, said:

"Wretched verses; fit to be thrown into the fire."

The hearts of those present ceased to beat from terror, as-Nero from his years of childhood never heard from anyone'slips a similar sentence. Tygellinus' face brightened with joy. Vinicius ipstead grew pale, judging that Petronius, who seldom got drunk, was surely out of his senses now. But Nero began to ask with a pleading voice, which showed, however grieved, deeply wounded vanity:

"What dost thou find not good in them?"

But Petronius at once attacked him:

"Do not believe them," he said, pointing at those present, they understand nothing. Thou askest what defect there? was in thy verses? If thou wishest truth, then I will tell thee. They are good for Virgil, good for Ovid, good even for Homer, but not for thee. Thou art not allowed to write-such. That conflagration thou describes! is not blazing: enough, thy fire does not scald enough. Do not listen to Lucan's flatteries. If he wrote those verses I would acknowledge him as a genius. And dost thou know why? For thou, art greater than they. To whom did the gods give so much as to thee? From him one may expect such. But thou art idle. Thou preferrest to sleep after dinner rather than to sit close-at work. Thou canst create a work of which the world did not hear hitherto, and therefore I tell thee to thy facet Write better ones!"

And he spoke this carelessly, as if jeering, and at the same time grumbling, but Caesar's eyes were covered with

tears of delight, and he said:

"1 They have given me some talent, but they have given me something more besides, a true judge and friend, who-alone knows how to speak truth to one's face." Saying this, he stretched his fat hand, covered with reddish hair, to a golden candelabrum, plundered in Delphi, to burn the? verses, but Petronius took them away from him, before the: flames touched the papyrus.

"No, no!" he said, "even as wretched as they 'are, they

belong to humanity. Leave them to me."

"Then let me send them to thee in a box of my design,"-answered Nero, embracing him.

And after awhile he began to speak:

"True, thou art right. My conflagration of Troy does not scald enough. I thought however, that if I will equal Homer, this will suffice. A certain bashfulness and low estimate of myself has always hampered me. Thou hast opened my eyes; but dost thou know why it is as thou sayest? When a sculptor wishes to create a statue of a god, he seeks for a mould. I never saw a burning city, and for that Teason there is lack of truth in my description."

<1 Then I will tell thee that one must be a great artist to

understand this."

Nero meditated for awhile, and then said:

' Answer me one question, Petronius; dost thou regret

that Troy was burnt?"

"Do I regret? By the lame spouse of Venera, not at all! And I will tell thee why! Troy would not be burnt if Prometheus would not give fire to the people, and if the Greeks would not declare war on Priam; but if there would be no fire jEschylos would not have written his Prometheus, just as Homer would not have written the Iliad. And I prefer that the Prometheus and the Iliad exist, rather than a little paltry town, probably shabby and dirty, should be preserved, a town in which at best there would now be an aspect procurator, who would annoy thee by his quarrels with the local areopagus."

"That is what I call speaking reasonably," answered Cffisar. "For poetry and art it is allowed to sacrifice everything. Happy were the Achaeans, who furuished Homer with the substance for the Iliad, and Priam, who saw the ruin

of his fatherland. And I? I did not see a burning city."

A moment of silence followed which was finally broken by

Tygellinus.

Ancium. Or dost thou know what? It thou art sorry for the villas and palaces, I will order to burn the ships in Ostia, or will build thee on the Albanian hill a wooden city, to which thou wilt set fire thyself. Dost thou wish it?"

But Nero cast a look full of contempt at him.

'I shall look on burning wooden sheds? Thy mind grows entirely sterile, Tygellinus I And I see besides, that thou dost not very highly value my talent, and my Troica, when thou thinkest that some other sacrifice would be too great for it."

Tygellinus became confused, but Nero, as if wishing to

change the conversation, added:

11 The summer is coming...... Oh, how must Rome stink now !.. .. And still it will he necessary to return there for the summer games'."

Suddenly Tygellinus said:

"When thou wilt dismiss the Augustians, Cæsar, allow me to remain for a moment with thee..."

An hour later Vinicius, returning with Petronius from the

imperial villa, said:

<11 had through thee a moment of fright. I thought that while drunk thou hadst ruined thyself beyond help. Remem-

ber that thou playest with death."

"This is my arena," answered Petroniuscarelessly, "and the feeling that I am, while, on it, the best of gladiators, amuses me. See how it ended. My influence has grown greater. He will send me his poems in a box, which will be immensely rich and immensely in bad taste. I will order my physicians to hold in it purgative remedies. I have done this also because Tygellinus, seeing how such things succeed, will surely wish to imitate me: and I can imagine what will happen when he will suggest an expedient change of verse. It will be as if a Pirenean bear wished to walk on a rope. I will laugh like Democritus. If I wished it indispensably, I would perhaps be able to ruin Tygellinus, and to become the prefect of the pretorians in his stead. Then I would have in my power Bronzebeard himself. But I am sluggish. I prefer from convenience such a life as I lead, and even Cæsar's poems."

'1 What a dexterity which even from a censure is able to make a flattery! But, really are those verses so bad ? I do

not understand."

'They are not worse than others. Lucan has in one finger more talent, but in Bronzebeard there is something too. There is above all a passion for poetry and music. In two days we were to be with him, to hear the music of the hymn to Aphrodite, which he will finish to-day or to-morrow. We will be in a small circle. Only thou, myself, Julius, Senecio, and the young Nerva. As to the verses, when I have told thee that I use them after the feast, just as ViteliUs uses the feathers of flamingos, it was not true !.... They are. sometimes expressive. The words of Hecuba are touching. "Who can foresee to what the madness of Ahenobarbus

will go?" said Vinicius.

•Absolutely nobody. Such things can happen that the hair will stand on the heads of people for whole centuries at thought at them. But this is curious, interesting, and though more than once I became as weary as Jo vis of Ammon in the desert, I think that under another Cæsar I would weary still more. Thy Hebrew, Paul, is eloquent, this I grant to him, and if similar men will preach that teaching, our gods must be on their guard, lest in time they will go to the garret. It is true that if, for instance, Cæsar would become a Christian we would all feel safer. But thy Paul of Tarsus applying his proof to me, did not know that for me, uncertainty makes life attractive.

\*Who does not play dice but will not lose his property, and still people are playing it. There is a certain delight and a certain forgetting in this. I knew sons of knights and sons of senators who became gladiators voluntarily. I, thou sayest, play with life, and so it is, but I do this for it amuses me, while your Christian virtue would weary me like the discourses of Seneca, in a day. Therefore, Paul's elocution was wasted. He ought to understand that such a man as I will never take that teaching. Thou art something different! With thy disposition thou eouldest either hate the name of a Christian as a pest, or become one. I acknowledge their reasonableness, while yawning at them. We rage,, we haste towards the abyss, something unknown comes to us froln the future, something breaks under us, something dies near us—agreed! But we will know how to die; and meaiiwhile we do not wish to burden life and serve the death, before it will take us. The life exists for itself and not for death."

"But 1 am sorry for thee, Petronius!"

'Do not be sorry for me, more than I am myself. Formerly thou felt well to be among us, and while warring in Armenia, you longed for Rome."

"And now I am longing for Rome."

"Yes, for thou hast fallen in love with a Christian vestal,, who lives in the Trans-Tiber. Neither do I wonder at that, nor blame thee for it. I wonder more, that in spite of that teaching of which thou speakest, that it is a sea of happiness, and in spite of that love which is to be wreathed shortly, the sadness does not leave thy face. Pomponia Graecina is eternally sad, and thou, since the time of becoming a Christian, hast ceased to smile. Therefore, do not persuade me that it is a joyful teaching! Thou hast returned from Rome sadder yet. If you love each other in this Christian manner, then by the bright curls of Bacchus, I will not follow your steps."

"That is something else," answered Vinicius, "I swear to thee, not by the curls of Bacchus, but by the soul of my father, that never before have I experienced a foretaste of happiness with which I breathe to-day. But I am longing exceedingly, and what is more curious, when I am far away from Lygia, it seems me that some danger is threatening her. I do not know what, and do not know where it might come

from, but I anticipate it as one anticipates a storm."

'In two days I take the liberties to obtain for thee a permit to leave Ancium for as long as thou pleasest. Poppsea is, somewhat quieter, and as much as I know, nothing from her threatens either thee or Lygia."

' 'To-day she asked me what had I done in Rome that

my departure was secret.",

"It is possible she ordered slaves to follow thee! Now, however, even she has to respect me."

Vinicius stopped him and said:

"Paul said that sometimes God warns, but does not allow one to beleve in omens, I hence defend myself against that belief, and I cannot do it. I will tell thee what happened, to cast, off the weight from my heart. I was sitting with Lygia on a certain night as bright as this, and we were arranging our future life. I cannot tell thee how happy and calm we were. Suddenly lions began to roar. This is a common thing in Rome, but still from that moment I have had no peace. It seems to me that it was some threat, as if a prediction of misfortune. Thou knowest that terror does not seize me easily,, but at that time, however, something happened that, terror filled the whole darkness of the night. This camp so strangely and unexpectedly that now I have always these

jechoes in my ears, and a constant alarm in my heart, as if Lygia needed my protection from something terrible, even from these very lions. And I am tormented. Obtain for me the permission of the departure, for otherwise I will depart without one. I cannot stay here, I repeat, I cannot!"

Petronius began to laugh.

'It has not come so far that the sons of the consular men or 'their wives are given to lions on the arenas. Any other death you may meet, but not such a one. Besides, who knows whether these were loin roars, for the German urus roar as loud as the lions. As to me, I jeer at omens and fates. Yesterday the night was warm and I saw stars falling down. Many a one feels unpleasant at such sight, but I thought: If among them there is mine, then I will at least have no lack of society!"

Then he kept silent for a while, and meditating said:

'Besides, thou seest, if your Christ rose from the dead,

he might save you both from death."

"May be," answered Vinicius, looking at the sky studded with stars.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

Nero played and sang a hymn in honor of the "Lady of ^Cyprus" the verses and music of which had been composed by himself. He was in good voice- that day, and felt that his music really charmed those present, and feeling thus it added so much power that his own soul thrilled, and he seemed to be inspired. Finally he grew pale from sincere emotion. This was probably the first time in his life that he did not wish to hear praises from those listening. For a moment he sat with his hands upon the cithra, and bowed head; then suddenly he stood up and said: "lam tired and need air, meanwhile tune the cithras." Having said this, he wrapped a silk handkerchief around his neck. "You came with me," he said, addressing Petronius and Vinicius, sitting in the corner. "Thou, Vinicius, give me thy arm for strength fails me, and Petronius will speak to me of music."

Then they went out on the terrace of the palace, which

was inlayed with alabaster and strewed with saffron.

"Here one breathes more freely," said Nero. "My soul is moved and sad, though I see that with what I sung to you for trial, I can appear publicly, and it will be a triumph which no Roman ever achieved. " 'Thou canst appear in Rome and in Achsea: I have admired thee with my whole heart and soul, 0 divine!" answered Vinicius.

Turning to Petronius Nero said: "I know thou art too lazy to force thyself to praises. And thou art sincere as Tullius Senecio, but thou art a better judge than he. Tell me, what

dost thou think of the music?"

" When I listen to the poetry, when I look at a quadriga which thou drivest in the circus, at a beautiful statue, a beautiful temple or picture, I feel that I embrace what I see, and that I find ecstacy in everything that these things can give. But when I listen to the music, especially to thine, new beauties and delights open before me. I rave after them, I seize them; but before I can take them into myself, new and still newer ones flow forth as sea-waves, which go on to infinity. And sol will tell thee, that music is like a sea. We stand on the one shore and we see the distance, but it is impossible to see the other shore."

"Ah, what a deep judge thou art!" said Nero. And they walked for a moment in silence, only the saffron rustled

slightly under their feet.

"Thou hast expressed my idea finally," said Nero, "and therefore, I say that in the whole Rome thou alone canst understand me.. So it is I think the same way of music. When I play and sing, I see such things of which I knew not that they exist in my empire or in the world. I am a Caesar and the world belongs to me-I can do everything. And still the music discovers for me new kingdoms, new mountains and seas, and new delights, which I knew not hitherto. Often I cannot name them, nor understand them—I only feel them. I feel the gods, I see Olympus. A certain wind from beyond the earth blows on me; I perceive as if in a mist some immeasurable greatness, calm and as bright as the rising sun. The whole Sferos plays around me, and I will tell thee"—here Nero's voice quivered with a real astonishment—"that I, Caesar and god, feel myself in such times as little as dust. Will thou give credance to that?"

"Yes, only great artists can feel themselves little in the

presence of art."

'1 To-day is a night of sincerity, therefore I open before thee my soul, as before a friend, and will the more. Dost thou think that I am blind and deprived of my reason? Dost thou think that I do not know that in Rome people write insults on the walls against me, that they call me a matricide and a wife-murderer? that they hold me for a monster, for a ruthless tyrant, because Tygellinus obtained from me a few death sentences against my enemies? Yes, dear, they hold me for a monster and I know of that. They have talked cruelly about me, to such a degree that I sometimes put the question to myself: Am I not a tyrant. But they do not understand that the deeds of a man can be sometimes cruel, while the man himself is not. Ah! nobody will believe, and perhaps thou too, will not believe that at times, when music sways my soul, I feel as happy as an infant in the cradle. I swear to thee by the stars which shine above, that I speak the sincere truth; the people do not know how much good lies in the heart, and what treasures I myself see in it, when the music opens the door to them."

Petronius, who had not the slightest doubt that Nero spoke at that moment sincerely, and that music may really disclose various more noble inclinations of his soul, hidden under mountains of debauchery, profligacy and crime, said: "One

must know thee as I do. Rome never appreciated thee."

Cffisar leaned more heavily on the arm of Vinicius, as if he' was bending under the burden of injustices and answered: 'Tygellinus told me that in the Senate it is whispered into one another's ears that Diodorus and Terpnos play the cithra better than I. They refuse me even that! But thou, who always speakest the truth, tell me sincerely, do they play better than I, or equally as well?"

"Not at all, thou hast a sweeter touch, and at the same time more power. The artist is evident in thee—the skilful artisans in them. On the contrary, hearing previously their

music, one understands better what thou art.

"If it is so, then let them live. They will never guess what service thou hast rendered them in this moment. Besides, if I would sentence them, I would be obliged to take others in their places."

"And the people would say, that from love of music thou extermined music in thy dominion. Never kill art for art's sake, 0 divine one."

"How thou art different from Tygellinus," answered Nero.

"But, thou seest, I am an artist in everything, and as the music opens before me expanses the existence of which I did not think of—which I do not rule, delight and happiness which I never had, so I cannot live a common life. The music tells me that extraordinarily exists, therefore I seek such with all the power of the sovereignty which the gods placed into my hands. Ofttimes it seems to me that in order to reach those Olympian worlds it is necessary to make something that no man has ever done hitherto, it is necessary to surpass the human level either in good or evil. I know" also the people believe that I am raving. But I am not mad—I am only seeking! And if I am mad it is from weariness and impatience that I cannot find. I am seeking! Thou understandst me, and therefore I wish to be greater than man, for only in such a way I can be the greatest artist."

Here he lowered his voice so that Vinicius could not hear him, and placing his lips to Petronius' ear, he began to whisper:

Ost thou know that I have condemned my mother and wife chiefly for this? I wished to give the greatest offering

man can give."

"I thought that later something would happen that doors would open through which I would see something unknown. Let it be more wonderful or more terrible than human conception, if it were only uncommon or great. But that sacrifie was not sufficient. For opening the empyre.an doors it is evident that there must be something greater—and let it happen—as the Fates wish."

"Whatdost thou intend to do?"

"Thou wilt see, sooner than thou supposest. Meanwhile know that there are two Neros: one such as the people know, the other an artist whom thou only knowest, and who, if he kills as death, or raves as Bacchus, it is because he is choked by the flatness and the paltriness of common life, and who would like to root it out even if by fir.e or iron. O! how flat this world will be when I will leave it! Nobody suspects, even thou, dear, what an artist I am. But precisely on that account I suffer, and tell thee sincerely that the soul in me becomes sometimes gloomy, like

those cypresses which blacken there in front of us.

" It is difficult for a man to bear the burden of the high-

est power and of the greatest talent at the same time."

"I am inspired with thee, Csesar, from my whole heart, and with me the earth and sea, not counting Vinicius, who' idolizes thee in his soul."

'He, too, was always agreeable to me, "said Nero,

"though he serves Mars, not the muses."

"He serves above all Aphrodite," answered Petronius.

And suddenly he determined to settle the affair of his nephew at a blow, and at the same time to remove all dangers which might threaten him.

' He fell so in love as Troilus with Cressida, " he said. "Allow him to leave for Rome lest he will dry out and

die in my care."

' 'Dost thou know that Lygian hostage whom thou hast presented to him has been found, and Vinicius, leaving for Ancium, left her under the protection of a certain Linus? I did not mention this to thee, for thou wert composing thy hymn, and it was more important than anything else. Vinicius wished to make a mistress out of her, but when she proved to be as virtuous as Lucretia, he fell in love with her virtue and desires to marry her. She is a daughter of a king and will cause him no diminution, but he is a real soldier. He sighs, dries, groans, but waits for the permission of his imperator."

"The imperator does not choose wives for his soldiers.

Therefore why does he need any permission?"

1 told thee lord, that he idolizes thee."

<sup>1</sup> 'The more he may be sure of my permission. That is a pretty girl, but too narrow in the hips. Augusta Poppeea complained against her, before me, that she enchanted our child in the garden of the Palatine."

"But I told Tygellinus that divinities are not subject to bad charms. Dost thou remember, 0 divine! how he became

confused, and how thyself hast cried: 'Habetl' "

"I remember."

Here he turned to Vinicius.

"Dost thou love her as Petronius says?

"Hove her, lord!" answered Vinicius.

"Then I order thee to go to Rome to-morrow and make merry, and not show thyself to my eves without the marriage ring.

"Thanks to thee, lord, from my heart and soul."

"O how agreeable it is to make people happy," said

Caesar, 'I would wish to do nothing else in my life.

<sup>1</sup> 'Do us one more favor, 0 divine! and declare thy will in Augusta's presence. Vinicius would never dare to marry a creature to whom Augusta feels a dislike, but thou, lord, will dissipate her predjudice with one word, declaring that thou hast ordered so thyself."

"Very well," said Caesar, "to thee and Vinicius I would

refuse nothing."

And he turned toward the villa, and they went with him, full of joy from the victory in their hearts. Vinicius had to restrain himself from embracing Petronius, for it seemed

that all dangers and obstacles were now cast aside.

In the atrium of the villa young Nerva and Tullius Senecio were entertaining Augusta with conversation. Terpnos and D.yodorus were tuning cithras. Nero entered and sat on a chair, inlaid with tortoise shell, and whispering something into the ear of a Greek bodyguard, waited.

The lad soon returned with a golden box. Nero opened,

it, and taking out a necklace of big opals, said:

"These are jewels worthy of the occasion."

"The dawn is sparkling in them," answered Poppsea, in the conviction that the necklace was destined for her.

Caesar for a moment raised and lowered the gems and

finally said:

"Vinicius, thou wilt present this necklace to the young daughter of the Lygian king for me, whom I command thee

to marry."

Poppeea's glance, full of anger and sudden astonishment, passed from Caesar to Vinicius, and finally rested on Petronius. Blit the Epicurean, leaning carelessly over the arm arm of the chair, was passing his hand along the neck of the harp as if wishing to remember accurately its shape. Meanwhile Vinicius, having given thanks for the gift, approached Petronius and said:

"With what will I repay thee for what thou hast done for

me to-day?"

"Offer Euterpia a pair of swans," answered Petronius; 'Praise Csesar's songs, and laugh at omens. I hope that the roar of lions will not interrupt thy sleep, nor that of thy Lygian lily."

"No," said Vinicius, "now I am perfectly calm."

' 'May fortune be favorable to you. But now be attentive, for Caesar again takes up his lyre. Hold thy breath, listen and shed tears.'

And, in fact, Caesar took the lyre in his hand and raised his eyes to heaven. The conversations in the hall ceased, and those present were sitting as if petrified. Only Terpnos and Dyodorus, who were to accompany Caesar, moved, turning their heads now at each other, and now at his lips, awaiting the first tunes of the song.

But suddenly a movement and noise arose in the lobby, and after a moment from beyond the curtain appeared Caesar's freedman, Faon, and close behind him the consul,

Lecanius.

Nero frowned.

"Pardon, divine Imperator," said Faon, with a panting voice, 'there is a conflageration in Rome, and the larger part of the city is in flames!"....

At this news all sprang from their seats. Nero put away

the lyre and said:

"Gods!...I will see a burning city and finish the Troica." Then he turned to the consul: "Departing at once will I arrive in time to see the conflageration?"

"Lord," answered the consul, "there is one sea of flames over the entire city. The smoke chokes the inhabitants, and the people faint or throw themselves into the fire from madness... Rome is perishing, 0 lord."

A moment of silence followed, interrupted by an outcry

from Vinicius.

"Vaa misero mihi!"

And the young man, throwing his toga aside, ran from the palace.

Nero raised his hands to heaven and cried:

"Woe to thee, holy town of Priam!"

# CHAPTER XIX.

Vinicius had just time to command several slayes to follow him, then jumping on his horse galloped at full speed into the deserted streets of Ancium, toward Laurentum, Falling into a state of frenzy and mental bewilderment through the terrible news, at moments he could not account for what was happening. He thought that on the very same horse behind him sat misfortune shouting into his ears: "Rome is burning!' It was lashing him and the horse, nagging them into that fire. Bending his bare head to the horse's neck, he drove at random, not looking ahead and paying no attention to the obstacles against which he might shatter himself to pieces.

In the calm and starry night the rider and horse appeared like phantoms. The Idumean stallion lowering his ears and stretching his neck flew like an arrow, passing the motionless cypresses and white villas hidden among them. The horse's clatter on the stone slabs awoke the dogs here and there which accompanied the strange vision with barking, and then alarmed by its suddenness began to howl, raising their jaws to the moon. The slaves following Vinicius, having much inferior horses, soon fell behind. But he himself, rushing like a storm through the sleeping Laurentum, turned toward Ardea, in which, equally as in Aricia, Bovillae and Ustrinum, he kept fresh horses from the time of his arrival in Ancium, in order to be able to reach Rome in the shortest possible time. Remembering this, he drew the remaining strength from the horse.

Behind Ardea it seemed to him that in the northeastern part of the sky there was a reflection. This might also be the morning dawn, for the hour was late and the days began early in July. But Vinicius could not restrain aery of despondency and rage, for it seemed to him that it was a glare of the conflagration. He remembered the words of Lecanfus: "The whole city is one sea of flames," and fora moment he felt that madness really threatened him, having entirely lost the hope of being able to save Lygia, or to even reach the city, before the fire will change it to one heap of ashes. His thoughts became quicker than the swiftness of the horse, and they ran before him as a flock of blackbirds, deperate and monstrous. It was true he did not know which part of the town began to burn first, he supposed it would be the Trans-Tiber, which was crowded with houses, lumber yards and wooden sheds in which slaves were sold.

In Rome fires were not infrequent and were accompanied by violence and pillaging, especially in the neighborhoods inhabited by poor and half-barbarous people. What

then would take place on the Trans-Tiber, which was the! nest of rabble from all parts of the globe?

Here Ursus, with his superhuman strength, flashed through Vinicius' head, but what could a man, even a Titan, do against the destroying power of the fire. The fear of the slaves uprising was also a nightmare which for years threatened Rome. It was said that hundreds of. thousands of these men were dreaming of the times of Spartacus, and only awaited an opportune moment to seize arms against the oppressors and the city. And now the moment had arrived. Perhaps in the city by the side of the conflagration, slaughter and war were raging. May be even the pretorians were attacking the city and murdering at Caesar's, command. And suddenly the hair rose on his head through, terror. He recalled all conversations of the conflagrations of cities, which for some time were carried on with strange obstinacy at Caesar's court; he recalled his complaints that he had to describe a burning city having never seen a real conflagration; his contemptuous answer to Tygellinus, who undertook to set fire to Ancium or an artificial wooden city, and finally his lamentation against Rome and the fetid lanes of the Subura.

Yes, it was Caesar who ordered the city to be burned. He alone would dare do this, and only Tygellinus could undertake to execute a similar command. And if Rome was burning by Caesar's order, who can warrant that the population will not be murdered at his command? This monster is capable of such a deed. The groans of Vinicius intermingled with the snorts and groans of the horse which, running on a road which rose continually to Aricia, was exhausted. "Who will snatch her from a burning city, and who can save her? " Here Vinicius, almost lying on the horse, thrust his fingers in his hair ready to bite the horse's neck in his agony. But at that moment some horseman, also riding like a whirlwind, but going the Opposite direction, to Ancium, cried, passing by Vinicius: "Gods! Rome is perishing 1" and rode on. Only one word reached Vinicius' ears, the rest was deafened by the clatter of the horse's hoofs. But that word sobered him. "Gods!" •{Suddenly Vinicius raised his head and stretching his arms toward heaven, studded with stars, began to pray: "Ido not call you, whose temples are burning, but Thee!

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Thou hast suffered Thyself! Thou alone art merciful! Thou alone hast understood human pain! Thou hast come to the world to teach the people pity, so show it now. If Thou art such as Peter and Paul say, save my Lygia for me. Take her in Thy arms and bear her out of the flames. Thou canst do that. Give her back to me and I will give Thee my blood. And if Thou wishest not to do this for me, do it for her. She loves and trusts Thee. Thou promisest life and happiness after death, but she does not wish to die yet. Let her live; Take her in Thy arms and lead her out of Rome. Thou canst if Thou wishest."

And he stopped, feeling that further prayer might change into a threat; he feared to offend the Divinity in a moment when he needed His mercy and favor most. He was struck with fear at the very thought of that, and in order not, to admit even the shade of a threat, he began again to lash his horse, especially when the white walls of Aricia, which was situated in the hallway to Rome, began to appear ahead of him. After awhile he ran at full speed past the temple of Mercurius, which stood in a grove in the outskirts of the city. Evidently they already knew of the distress, for an uncommon movement reigned before the temple. Vinicius saw people on the stairs and between the columns, who were crowding to put themselves under the protection of the divinity. Many people now began to appear on the streets. It is true that crowds were hastening to the grove by side paths, but even on the main road groups appeared, which hurriedly drew aside before the galloping horseman. From the city could be heard the sound of voices. Vinicius burst into it as a whirlwind, overthrowing and trampling several persons on the way. All around him he heard the shouts: "Rome is burning! the city is in flames! Gods save Rome!"

The horse stumbled, and feined by astrong arm, sank down on its hind feet before the inn in which. Vinicius kept another relay horse. The slaves, as if expecting their master's arrival, stood before the inn and at his command rushed in over one another to bring a fresh horse, while Vinicius, seeing a detachment of ten mounted pretorians which evidently rode from the city With the news to Ancium, sprang up to them and began to question them,

"Which part of the city is on fire?"
"Who art thou?'-' asked the decurion.

"Vinicius, military tribune and an Augustian! Answer

by thy head!"

'The conflagration, lord, broke out in the shops near Great Circus. When we were dispatched, the middle of the city was on fire."

And the Trans-Tiber?"

\* The flame has not yet reached there, but it is spread rapidly on all sides.

"People are perishing from heat and smoke and any rescue

is impossible?'

At that moment a fresh horse was brought to Vinicius. The young tribune jumped on his back and galloped away.

He rode to Albanum, leaving at his right Albalongea

and its magnificent lake.

The road to Azicia led upwards at the foot of a mountain which entirely hid the horizon and Albanum lying on its other side. Vinicius knew, however, that on reaching the top he would see not only Bovillee and Ustrinum in which fresh horses were awaiting him, but also Rome, for beyond Albanum the level, low Campania stretched on both sides of the Appian Road, along which only arcades of the aqueducts ran toward the city and nothing obstructed the view.

"From the summit I will see flames," he said to himself. And he began to lash the horse. But before he reached the summit he smelt smoke. And suddenly the summit of the

hill began to appear golden.

"Reflection of the blaze," thought Vinicius.

The night, however, had paled long since; the dawn broke into daylight, and on all the near hills golden and rosy gleams were shining which might arise from the conflagration or from the dawn. Vinicius galloped up to the summit and and a terrible sight struck his eyes. The whole dale was covered with smoke, creating as if one gigantic cloud, lying close to the earth, in which towns, aqueducts, villas apd trees vanished, and at the end of that gray, shocking plain the city was burning on the hills.

The conflagration had not the shape of a blazing pillar, as .

happens when a single or even a large building is burning.

It appeared as a long ribbon, similar to a dawn.

Above this belt rose a wave of smoke, in places entirely black, in places glittering rosy and bloody, proturberant, thick, curling like a serpent which shrinks find lengthens. That monstrous wave at times seemed to cover even the blazing ribbon so that it became as narrow as a tape, but at times again illminated the smoke from beneath, changing its lower volumes into blazing waves. They extended from one end of the horizen to the other. The Sabine mountains were not visible at all.

At the first gleam of the eye, it seemed to Vinicius that not only the city was burning, but the whole world, and that no living being could save itself from this ocean of fire and smoke. The wind blew stronger and stronger from the side of the fire, bringing the smell of burning matter and mist which began to envelope even the nearer objects. The day became complete, and the sun lighted the summits surrounding the Albanian lake. But the light yellow morning rays appeared through the mist rufous and sickly. Entering Albanum he rode through smoke still denser and

less transparent.

The town was engulfed within it. The alarmed inhabitants moved out to the street and it was fearful to think what it must be in Rome when even here it was difficult to breathe. Despondencj' seized him again, but he tried to strengthen himself the best he could. 'It is impossible.," he thought, 'that the whole city should begin to burn at once. The wind blows from the north and brings the smoke in this direction, only. There is none on the other side'. The Trans-Tiber separated by the river may be wholly saved, and in any case, it will be enough for Ursus to pass with Lygia through the Janiculean gate, to be safe from danger. It is equally impossible that the whole populace should perish and that the city which reigns the world should be wiped from the face of the earth. Even in conquered towns when slaughter and fire were raging at once, a certain amount of people save their lives, why then, should it be Lygia who has to perish? Is not God, who Himself conquered death, watching over her?" Reasoning thus, he again began to pray, and according to the custom to which he had been brought up, he made great vows to Christ together with promises of gifts and offerings. Hastening through Albanum in which nearly the whole populace was sitting on the roofs and trees to look at Rome, he appeased himself somewhat and regained his cool bearing. He thought that hot only Ursus and Linus guard Lygia, but also Peter the

Apostle. At the very thought of this, new hope entered his heart. Peter was always an incomprehensible, almost superhuman, creature to him. From the moment he heard him in Ostrianum, a strange impression overcome him, of which in the beginning of his sojourn in Ancium he wrote to Lygia—"that every word of this old man is truth or must become truth." The near acquaintance which during his illness he formed with the Apostle, strengthened that impression, which afterwards changed into unshaken faith. So if Peter blessed his love and promised him Lygia, then Lygia could not perish in the flames. The city may burn, but not a spark from the fire will fall on her garments. Under the influence of a sleepless night, a mad ride, and strange emotions, Vinicius was now seized by a strange exultation in which everything seemed to him possible.

'Peter will make a sign of cross and the flames will open with one word, and they will pass safely midst lanes of fire." Besides he thought Peter knew of future events, so he foresaw the catastrophe and warned the Christians, among them, Lygia, whom he loved as his own child. And stronger and stronger hope began to enter Vinicius. He thought that if they escape from the city, he may find them in Bovillse or meet them on the way. Perhaps the beloved face will protrude at any moment from this smoke, which was spread-

ing broader and broader in the whole Campania.

This seemed to him the more probable, since he began to meet an increasing number of people on the road, who, leaving the city, went to the Albanian mountains, and having escaped the fire, wished now to get beyond the smoke.

Before he reached Ustnnum he had to slacken his speed on account of the crowding of the road. Besides pedestrians with bundles on their backs, he met horses loaded with packs; mules, wagons packed with effects; and finally-even litters, in which slaves bore wealthier citizens. Ustrinum was already so filled with refugees from Rome that it was difficult to get through the crowd. On the market place, under the columns of the temples, and on the streets, it swarmed with fugitives. Here and there people began to erect tents, under which whole families were to seek refuge. Others camped under the bare sky, shouting, calling gods or cursing the fates. In the general dismay, it was difficult to get information. The people whom Vinicius addressed either did

not answer him at all, or raised their eyes, half-closed from terror, answering that the city and world were perishing. From the direction of Rome arrived new crowds composed of men, women and children, which increased the confusion and lamenting. Some who lost each other in the throng sought desperately those miscarried. Others fought over campings. Crowds of half-wild shepherds from Campania crawled to the town, seeking news or profits from the mob, which was facilitated by the disturbance. Here and there a crowd composed of slaves of every nationality, and gladiators, began to plunder houses and villas, and to fight with the soldiers who came to- the defense of the citizens.

Senator Junius, whom Vinicius saw at the inn, surrounded by a band of Bavarian slaves, was the first to give him a more exact information of the conflagration. ''The fire originated really at the Great Circus, in the part which adjoins Palatine and the Ceelius hill, but spread with incomprehensible quickness, so that it embraced the whole center of the city. Never yet, since the times of Brennus had such a terrible catastrophe fallen upon the city. The whole Circus was burned, as were also the surrounding shops and houses. Aventine and Caelius are on fire. The flames having's surrounded the Palatine reached Carinae."

Here Junius, who owned a maginificent insula on the Carinae, full of works of art which he loved, seized a handful of dust and strewing his head with it, began ts moan despairingly.

But Vinicius shook him by the shoulder:

"My house is also on the Carinae," he said—"but when everything perishes let it perish too."

Then remembering that Lygia, following his advice, might

have removed' to the house of Aulus, asked:

"And Vicus Patricius?"

"On fire!"—answered Junius.

"And Trans-Tiber?"

Junius looked at him with astonishment.

"Trans-Tiber does not matter," he said, pressing his paining temples with his hands.

' I care more for the Trans-Tiber than for , the whole

Rome!" exclaimed Vinicius with vehemence.

' Then thou canst reach it through the Via Portens, for near the Aventine the heat will choke thee... Trans-

Tiber? I do not know. The fire could not have reached that place yet, but when it will, the gods only know."

Here Junius hesitated for a moment, and then said in a

lowered voice:

"11 know that thou wilt not betray me, therefore I will tell thee that it is not a common blaze. The Circus was not permitted to be saved. I heard it myself. When the houses round about began to burn, thousands of voices cried: "Death to those who save!" Certain people ran through the city and threw flaming torches into the houses... From the other side the populace is stirring and crying that the city is blazing by a command. I will say nothing more. Woe to the city, Woe for us all, and to me! What is taking place there, a human tongue is unable to describe. The people are perishing in the flames, or murdering each other in the throng..... This is the end of Rome!"

And again he began to repeat, "Woe! Woe to the city and to us!" but Vinicius jumped on his horse and rushed on ahead by the Appian Way. But It was rather a pushing through the river of people and wagons, which were coming

from the city.

The city, surrounded bj' the monstrous conflagration, was lying now before Vinicius as if on his hand. From the sea of fire and smoke came a terrible heat, and the human shrieks could not stifle the hissing and roar of flames.

## CHAPTER XX.

As Vinicius approached the walls, he saw that it was easier to come to Rome, than to penetrate to the center of the city. It was difficult to crowd through the Appian Way on account of the throngs of people. Houses, fields, cemeteries, gardens and temples, lying on both sides of it were changed into camping grounds. In the temple of Mars, which stood close to the Porta Appia, the crowd broke open the doors in order to find in its interior a shelter for the night. At the cementaries the larger tombstones were seized, and battles were fought for their possession, which were waged even to bloodshed. Ustrinum with its disorder hardly gave a slight foretaste of what was taking place under the walls of the

city itself. All regard for the dignity of law, for office, for family ties, for difference of position had ceased. One saw slaves beating citizens with canes. The gladiators, drunk with wine, plundered the Emporium, united in big crowds, ran with wild shouts through the squares lying near the road, scattering the people, trampling them and plundering. A multitude of barbarians exposed for the sale in the city, escaped from the sale-shed. The conflagration and ruin of the I city was for them the end of slavery and the hour of revenge, so when the settled populace which had lost their whole property were raising their hands in despair to the gods, calling for rescue, the slaves with howls of joy were routing the crowds, tearing off clothing from the people's shoulders and

capturing young women.

They were joined by slaves who had served in Rome a long time, by wretched beggars having nothing on their bodies except a woolen girdle on their hips, and terrible figures from-the alleys, which were seldom seen on the streets in the day time, and whose existance in Rome was difficult to suspect. This crowd, composed of Asiatics, Africans, Greeks, Thracians, Germans and Britons, shouting in all the languages of the earth, raved wild and dissolute, thinking that the moment arrived in which it was allowed to reward themselves for years of sufferings and misery. Amid that agitated human throng, in the brightness of the day and conflagration, glittered helmets of the pretorians, under whose protection the more peaceful populace had taken refuge, and who, in a pitched battle had to rush the brutalized rabble in many places. Vinicins had seen captured cities, but his eyes never looked at a spectacle in which despair, tears, pain, groans, wild joy, frenzy, rage and dissolution, were mingled together in such an immense chaos. Above this heaving, crazy human throng the flames roared on the hills, and burned the largest city in the world, sending in the disorder its fiery breath and covering it with smoke, above which the blue sky was no longer visible. The young tribune with the greatest effort, exposing his life every moment, reached the Appian Gate, but here he saw that he would be unable to penetrate the city through that part of Porta Capeua not only on account of the throng but also because of the terrible heat from which the whole air was quivering behind the gate. Besides, the bridge near Porta Trigenia

across the Bonse Dea? temple was not standing and so wishing to get beyond the Tiber it was necessary to push through to the Sublicius Bridge, that is, to pass around the Aventine, through a part of the city flooded with one sea of flames. That was an utter impossibility. Vinicius understood that he must return in the direction of Ustrinum, to turn there from the Appian Way, to cross the river below the city and get on the Via Portuensis which led straight to the Trans-Tiber. That, too, was not an easy thing on account of the increasing confusion which reigned on the Appian Way. It was necessary to force one's way with a sword, but Vinicius had no weapons, having left Ancium in confusion, as the news of the conflagration reached him in Caesar's villa. But near the Mercurius Well he saw a confusion of petorians, who at the head of several dozens of men defended the access to the circle of the temple and ordered them to follow. Recognizing a tribune and an Augustian the centurion did not dare to disobey the order. Vinicius took the command of the detachment himself, and forgetting for the moment Paul's teachings of the love for fellow-man, pressed and cut the-crowd before him with a haste fatal to many who did not know how to get away quick enough. He and his pretorians were pursued by curses and a hail of stones, but he did not heed this, wishing to reach a free place as quick aspossible. Still it was possible to advance only with the greatest effort. The people who had already encamped themselves would not give way, cursing Caesar and the pretorians. In some places the throng assumed a threatening aspect. Voices accusing Nero of setting fire to the city reached Vinicius' ears. Caesar and Popptea were openly threatened with death. Shouts of "sannio!" "histrio!" "jester," " matricide!" were heard. Some shouted to drag him to the Tiber, another that Rome showed enough of patience. It was visible that those threats might change to an open revolt, which, if only/a leader was found, may break out any moment. Meanwhile the rage and the despair of the crowds burned against the pretorians, which were unable to get out of the throng for the reason that the road was blocked by whole piles of effects carried ont in haste from the fire. Boxes and barrels with provisions, the more costly furniture, vessels, infant cradles, beddings, wagons and hand-barrows. Here and there it came to an encounter,

but the pretorians knew well how to deal with the weaponless rabble. Having passed with difficulty across the Latin, Numician, Ardean, Luvinian and Ostian Ways, encircling villas, gardens, cemeteries and temples, Vinicius finally reached a little town called Vicus Alexandri, beyond which he crossed the Tiber. There it was more fire and less smoke. From fugitives of which there was no lack even here, he found out that only certain alleys of the Trans -Tiber were on fire, but that most surely nothing could resist the power of the flames, for there are men who set fire to the buildings purposely and who did not allow anyone to save their effects, shouting that they did this by an order. The young tribune had now not the slighest doubt that it was Ceesar who really commanded to set fire to Home, and the revenge which the people demanded seemed to him proper and just. What more could the Mithridates do, or any other of Rome's most rancorous enemies! The measure was exceeded, this madness became monstrous, and the human life too impossible because of it. Vinicius now believed that Nero's hour had come, that this ruin into which the city was falling ought and must heap upon the monstrous jester, together with all his crimes. If a man was found of sufficient daring to stand at the head of the despaired populace, that might happen in a few hours. Here daring and revengeful thoughts began to ply through Vinicius' head. What if he should do it? The house of Vinicius, which till recent times counted a whole series of consuls, was known throughout Rome. The crowds needed only a name. Once when four hundred slaves of prefect Pedanius Secundus were sentenced to death, a revolt and civil war was narrowly averted. What could happen to-day in view of the terrible catastrophe surpassing nearly all those which Rome experienced during the last eight centuries? He who calls the Quirites to arms, thought Vinicius, will undoubtedly overthrow Nero and put on himself the purple. And so why should he not do this? He was more able bodied, more vigorous and younger than other Augustians.... It is true , that Nero commanded thirty legions stationed on the outskirts of the dominion, but would not even these legions and its leaders be stirred at the news of the burning of Rome and its temples?.... And in such a case, Vinicius might becoifie a Cffisar. Was it not whispered amoDg the Augus322 OUO VADIS.

tians that a certain augur has predicted purple to Otho? In what was he (Vinicius) inferior? Perhaps Christ would help him with His Divine power, may be it is His inspiration! "Would that it was so!" cried Vinicius in his soul. Then he would take vengence on Nero for Lygia's danger and for his own trouble; he would establish a reign of justice and truth; lie would defend Christ's teachings from the Euphrates to the foggy banks of Brittany, and at the same time would clothe Lygia in purple and make her the mistress of the earth.

But those thoughts which burst forth as a sheet of sparks from a blazing house, went out as sparks. First of all it was necessary to save Lygia. He now looked at the catastrophe from near by, hence fear again seized him, and before that sea of flames and smoke, before the contact with the terrible reality, that confidence with which be believed that Peter the Apostle will save Lygia died entirely away. Despair seized him a second time, and so when he came out to the Via Portuensis which led straightly to the Trans-Tiber, he did not come to his reason again till he reached the gate near which it was repeated to him, what the fugitives said previously, that the larger part of the neighborhood was not yet seized by the conflagration, though the fire threw itself over the river in several places. But the Trans-Tiber was also full of smoke and escaping crowds, which it was more difficult to get through, because the people having more time carried out and saved more effects. The main Porta road itself, was completely filled in many places with household goods. Near Naumachia Augusta whole heaps of it were piled. The narrow lanes in which the smoke gathered more densely, were simply inaccessible. The inhabitants ran away from them by thousands. Vinicius saw dn the way shocking sights. More than once two human rivers flowing from opposite sides, meeting in a narrow passage, pressed against each other and fought mortally.

People fought and trampled one another. Families were separated in the disturbance, mother's were desperately calling their children. Vinicius' hair rose at the thought of whp.t must happen nearer the fire. Amid the shrieks and uproar it was difficult to inquire anything or understand the cries. At times new black volumes of smoke rolled from beyond the river, and so heavy that they moved near the

ground, covering houses, people, and all objects as the night covers them. But the wind caused by the conflagration dispersed them, and then Vinicius could proceed to the lane on which stood Linus' house. The heat of a July day increased by the heat of the burning parts became unbearable. The smoke corroded the eyes, breath failed in the breasts. Even those inhabitants who, in the hope that the flame would not cross the river, remained in their houses, began to leave them, and the throng became greater hourly. The pretorians accompanying Vinicius remained in the rear. In the crowd some one wounded his horse with a hammer: the stallion began to throw up its bloody head, to rear and refuse obedience to the horseihan. He was also recognized by the rich tunic of an Augustian, and immediately shouts were heard around about: "Death to Nero and his incendiaries!" It was a moment of threatful danger, for hundreds of hands stretched for Vinicius, but the frightened horse bore him away, trampling people, and at the same time a new wave of black smoke came and cast the street in darkness. Vinicius, seeing that he would be unable to pass, finally jumped to the ground and started to run on foot, slipping along walls, and at times waiting till the escaping multitude passed him. He thought to himself that those are vain efforts. Lygia might not be in the city, she might at this moment be saving herself by flight: it was easier to find a pin on the seashore than her in this crowd. He wished however, to reach Linus' house at the cost of his life. At times he stopped and rubbed his eyes. Tearing off the edge of his tunic, he covered his nose and mouth with it and ran on. In proportion as he approached the river, the heat increased. Vinicius, knowing that the fire originated at the Great Circus, believed' at first that this heat came from its ruins, and also from Forum Boarium and from Velabrum, which, lying near by, must have been also seized by flames. But the heat became unbearable. An old man on crutches, the last one to escape, whom Vinicius noticed, shouted:

11 Do not approach the bridge of Cestius! the whole island is on fire. "It was impossible to deceive himself any longer. At the turn towards Vicus Judaeorum, on which stood Linius' house, the tribune perceived a cloud of smoky flames; not only the island burned but also the Trans-Tiber, or at least the other end of the street on which Lygia lived.

Vinicius remembered that Linus' house was surrounded by a garden, beyond which, from the side of the Tiber, there was a small, unoccupied field. This thought encouraged him. The fire might stop on an empty place. In this hope he ran on, although every breeze brought 'not only smoke but thousands of sparks which could ignite a fire on the other end of the ally and cut off the return. Finally he saw through the smoky curtain cypresses in Linus' garden. The houses lying beyond the empty field burned like piles of wood, but the small "insula" of Linus' stood yet untouched. Vinicius looked with gratitude toward heaven and ran to the house, although the very air began to scald him. The doors were ajar, but he pushed them and rushed inside. There was not a living soul in the garden -and the house also seemed to be entirely empty.

"May be they have fainted from smoke and heat,"

thought Vinicius, and he began to call:

"Lygia! Lygia!"

Silence answered him. In the stillness only the roar of the distant fire could be heard. Suddenly there reached his ears the gloomy thunderings of terrified beasts. On the nearby island the fire evidently caught the vivarium which lay not far; from the temple of JEsculapus; in this vivarium was every kind of wild beasts, and among them lions began to roar from terror.

A shiver ran through Vinicius from head to feet. In a moment when his whole being was absorbed in the thought of Lygia, these terrible voices resounded as a prediction of misfortune, as a marvelous prophecy of ominous future.

This was, however, a short, momentary impression, for more terrible yet than the roar of the wild beasts—the peal of the fire compelled him to think of something else. It is true that Lygia did not answer the calling, but she' might be in a faint in this threatened building, or choked by smoke. Vinicius sprang to the center of the house. It was empty and dark from smoke. In the small atrium, he was seeking for the doors leading to the cubiculums when he noticed a gleaming light of a small lamp, and approaching he saw a lararium, in which instead of lares was a cross. Under this cross burned afire pot. Through the head of the young Augustian a, thought passed, that this cross sends him this light with which he can find Lygia, so he took the

fire pot ancl started to search through the cubiculums. Having found one, he pushed aside the curtain and lighting the fire pot, began to look around. But there -was no one there. Vinicius was sure, however, that he had found Lygia's cubiculum, for on the nails driven into the wall hung her clothing, and on the bed lay the capitium, a light garment which the women wore close to the body. Vinicins seized it, pressed it to his lips, and throwing it over his arm, started for further researches. The house was small, and so in a short time he visited all the rooms and even the cellars. But he found no one. It was more than evident that Lygia, Linus and Ursus, with the other inhabitants of the neighborhood, must have sought safety from the fire inflight.

"It is necessary to look for them among the crowd, be-

yond the gates of the city"—thought Vinicius.

He was not surprised that he did not meet them on the Via Portuensis, for they may have gone out by the Trans-Tiber, from the opposite side, in the direction of the Vatican Hill. In any case they were saved at least from the fire. A weight fell from his breast. He saw, it was true, with what terrible dangers the flight was connected, but the thought of the superhuman strength of Ursus comforted him, "Now I must escape from here and through thegardens of Dominica reach the gardens of Agrippina. There I will find them. The smoke is not so terrible there, for the wind blows from the Sabine mountains."

But now the time came in which he had to think of his own safety, for the wave of fire was flowing nearer and nearer from the side of the island, and volumes of smoke nearly covered the lane. The fire pot which he used in the house was quenched from the current of the air. Vinicius, rushing out to the street, ran at full speed toward the Via Portuensis, in the same direction whence he came, and the fire seemed to pursue him with its fiery breath, now surrounding him with fresh clouds of smoke, now bestrewing him with sparks which were falling on his hair, neck and clothing. The tunic began to smoulder in several places, but he did not heed this and ran on in the fear that smoke might choke him. He had the taste of burning and soot in his mouth, and his lungs burned as if on fire. The blood rushed to his head, so that at moriients everything appeared

red, and even the smoke itself seemed red to him. Then he was saying in his soul: "This is a live fire! It is better for me to throw myself on the ground and perish." The running tired him more and more. His head, neck and back were streaming with sweat, and that sweat scalded him as seething water. If not for the name of Lygia, which he was repeating in his mind, and if not for her capitium, with which he wrapped his mouth, he would have fallen. In a few moments however, he was not able to recognize the lane through which he ran. Consciousness was gradually leaving him; he remembered only that he had to escape, for Lygia, whom Peter the Apostle promised to him, waits for him on the open field. And suddenly he was seized by a certain stranger conviction, already half feverish, and similar to a vision previous to death, that he must see her, marry her and then die at once.

But now he was staggering from one side of the street to the other. All at once something changed in this monstrous fire which surrounded the gigantic city. Everything; which hitherto only smouldered, visibly burst forthwith one sea of flames, for the wind ceased to bring cmoke, and that which gathered in the lanes was blown away by the mad rush of the heated air. That onrush now drove millions of sparks, so that Vinicius ran as if in a fiery cloud. But he was able to see his way, and in the moment when he was ready to fall, he perceived the end of the lane. That sight gave him fresh strength. Passing the corner he found himself on the street, which led to Via Portuensis and the Cotanian field. The spark ceased to pursue him. He understood that if he will be able to run to the Port road, he will be saved from danger, even if he were to faint on it. At the end of the street he again perceived a cloud, which covered the exit.

"If this is smoke," he thought, "then I will not pass."

He ran with all his remaining strength. On the way he threw off his tunic, which, smoldering by the sparks, began to burn him like the shirt of Nessus, and he fan naked, only having on his head and mouth, Lygia's capitium. Coming nearer he distinguished that which he took for smoke was a cloud of dust, from which arose cries and shouts.

' The rabble is pillaging houses," he said to himself.

But he ran in the direction of the voices. In every case

people were there who could give him assistance. In this hope, before he reached them, he began to shout with his whole might of voice for help. But this was his last effort;, to his eyes everything appeared red, breath failed him and he fell.

He was seen falling, and two men with vessels full of water rushed to his assistance. Vinicius fell from exhaustion, but did not lose his consciousness; seizing the vessel with his hands he half emptied it.

11 Thanks, "he said; '1 place me on my feet—I will walk on.

alone."

The other workingman poured water on his head, and they both not only placed him on his feet, but lifted him from the ground and bore him to the crowd of others, who surrounded him, asking him solicitously if he had not suffered: much. This tenderness astonished Vinicius.

"People," he asked, "who are you?"

"We demolish houses so that the conflagration could not reach the Port road," answered one of the laborers.

"You came to my assistance when I fell. Thanks to-

yoi"

"We are not allowed to refuse aid," answered several, voices.

Then Vinicius, who from early morning looked at the brutal crowds, at fights, and pillaging—looked more attentively at the surrounding faces, and said:

<sup>1</sup> 'May Christ reward you."

<sup>1</sup> 'Glory to His name ! " exclaimed the whole chorus of voices.

"Linus?" asked Vinicius. But he could not ask any more and he did not hear the answer, for he fainted, from emotion and exhaustion. He revived only at the Cotanian field in a garden, surrounded by several women and men. The first words which he was able to utter were:

"Where is Linus?"

For a moment there was no answer, then some known, voice suddenly said:

"Beyond the Nome tan gate; he went to Ostrianum two. days ago. Peace to thee, 0 King of Persia!"

Vinicius raised himself and saw before him Chilo.

The Greek spoke:

"Thy house probably burned, 0 lord, for Carinas is on

fire, blit thou wilt always be rich like Midas. 0, what a misfortune! The Christians, 0 son of Serapis, predicted long ago that a, fire will'ruin this city.. ..But Linus, together with the daughter of Jove, is in Ostrianum. Oh! what a misfortune to that.city."

Vinicius became weak again.

"Hast thou seen them?" he asked.

" I saw, lord I... Thanks to Christ and all gods, that 1 could repay for thy benefactions with good news. But I, Ozirus, will repay thee yet, I swear by that burning Rome!"

Ozirus, will repay thee yet, I swear by that burning Rome!"
The shades of evening had fallen, but in the garden it was as bright as at day, for the conflagration increased. It seemed that now not only single divisions burned, but the whole city was enveloped in flames. The sky was red as far as the eye could reach, and to the world came a red night.

# PART III.

### CHAPTER I.

The blaze from the burning city illuminated the sky as far as the eye could reach. From behind the hills rose the moon large and full, which seemed to ignite instantly from the glare, and having assumed the appearance of molten brass, seemed to look with amazement upon the perishing world. In the roseate colors of the heavens, the stars were gleaming, but contrary to usual nights, the earth was more luminous than the skies. Rome illuminated the whole Campania like a gigantic pile. In the bloody light were seen hills, towns, villas, temples, monuments and aqueducts, leading from all the neighboring hills toward the city, and upon the aqueducts swarms of people, who sheltered themselves there for safety or to observe the conflagration.

The terrible element in the meanwhile was embracing new parts of the city. There was no doubt that some criminal hands were burning the city, for new fires were continually breaking out in places distant from the main fire. From the hills, upon which Rome was built, the flames flowed down like sea-waves into the valleys, densely covered with buildings numbering five and six stories, full of booths, stands, wooden amphitheatres, built specially for different shows; and finally of depots of wood, olive-oil, grain, nuts, cones of pinia, with the kernels of which the poor population nourished itself, and of clothing, which sometimes by the favor of Caesar was distributed among the rabble, nestling in the narrow alleys. There the fire, finding plenty of inflammable materials, almost changed to a series of explosions, and with unheard of rapidity enclosed whole streets. The people camping outside the city or standing upon the aqueducts, guessed by the color of the flame what was burning. The furious current of the air at times carried away from the fiery whirlpool thousands and millions of glowing shells of nuts and almonds, which shot up suddenly like countless flocks of gleaming butterflies and burst with a crash in the air, or, driven by the wind, fell on new parts of the town, on the aqueducts, and on the fields surrounding the city. All thought of help seemed absurd, and the tumult increased more and more, for on one side of the city the population was fleeing beyond the walls through each gate, from the other the conflagration attracted thousands of people from the neighborhood, the inhabitants of small towns, as well as peasantry and halfwild shepherds from Campania, with the hope of plunder-

The cry: "Rome is perishing!" did not leave the mouth of the crowd, and the destruction of the city seemed the end of rule and the loosening of all ties, which up till now joined humanity in a single thought. To the mob, in which the plurality was of men composed of slaves and new-comers, Rome's rule did not matter much, and thinking that, the overthrow would liberate from bonds, it assumed here and there a menacing attitude. Violence and plundering were spreading. It seemed that only the spectacle of the perishing city attracts human attention and checks the outbreak, of the slaughter which will begin as soon as the city will turn into ruins. Hundreds of thousands of slaves, forgetting that Rome, besides the temples and the walls, owns quite a number of legions in all parts of the world, seemed only to wait for the watch-word and the leader. They began to mention the

name of Spartacus, but Spartacus was not there; the citizens on the other hand began to gather and arm themselves with what they could. Most monstrous news circulated at all the gates. Some asserted that Vulcan, by order of J upiter, destroyed the city with fire coming from under the earth; others, that it was the vengeance of Vesta for the priestess Rubria. The people, so convinced, did not want to save anything, but besieging the temples they beseeched for mercy of the gods. But most commonly they repeated that Cæsar ordered Rome burnt in order to free himself of the odors coming from the Subufa, and to build a new city, under the name of Neronia. At this thought, fury was seizing the crowds, and if, as Vinicius thought, a leader would be found who wished to profit by this outburst of hatred, the the hour of Nero would strike whole years sooner than it did.

It was said also that Cæsar is gone mad, that he will command the pretorians and gladiators to attack the people and to make a general slaughter. Some swore by gods, that the beasts are let out from all vivaria by order of the Copperbeard. Lions with burning manes, and furious elpehants and bisons were seen on the streets trampling down the

people.

There was even a part of truth in it, for in some places, the elephants, at the sight of the fire, broke the vivaria, and, regaining freedom, they rushed in a wild panic in the direction away from the fire, destroying everything before them like a tempest. Public report estimated the number of person who perished in the fire at tens of thousands. In •fact, vast numbers perished. There were some, who, having .lost their whole property, or persons most dear to their hearts, voluntarily threw themselves into the flames. The smoke smothered others. In the center of the city, between the Capitol or one side, and the Quirinal, the Viminal and the Esquiline on the other, as also between Palatine and the kill of Cælius, where the streets were most densely covered with buildings, the fire started in so many places at once, that whole crowds of people, fleeing in one direction, met most unexpectedly a new wall of flames from the opposite side and perished by a most fearful death in the flood of fire.

In terror, confusion and bewilderment, it was not known

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finally, where to flee. The roads were obstructed w'tli things, anti in many places simply blockaded. Those who Sheltered themselves upon market places and the town squares, in the place where afterwards stood the Flavian Amphitheatre, near the temple of the Earth, near the Porticus of Livia and higher up near the temple of Juno and Lucinia, also between the old Esquiline Gate and the Clivus Vibrins, surrounded by a sea of fire, perished from the heat. In places where the flames did not reach, hundreds of bodies were found burned to a crisp, though here and there the unfortunates pulled out stone slabs for protection from the heat and half buried themselves in the ground. None of the families inhabiting the center of the city survived completely, therefore along the walls and on all the roads, the despairing howls of women were heard calling out the dear names of those who perished in the fire.

/ And, while some were begging the gods for mercy, others were blaspheming them in the presence of this terrible calamity. Old men were seen, turned toward the temple of Jupiter Liberator, who, extending their arms, called: "Thou art a liberator, save thy altar and thy city!" But the despair turned against the old Roman gods, who, in the opinion of the population, were obliged to watch over the city more carefully than others. They proved to be powerless, therefore they were scoffed at. On the other hand it happened that when on the Via Asinaria appeared a host of Egyptian priests, conducting the statute of Isis, which was saved from the temple, situated in the neighborhood of the Porta' Cselius; the mob rushed among the priests, seized the wagon, drew it to the Appian Gate, and, seizing the statue, they placed it in the temple of Mars, abusing at the same time the priests of that deity, which dared to resist them. In other places Serapis, Baal or Jehova were invoked, whose confessors, swarming out from the lanes of the neighborhood of Subura and Trans-Tiber, filled the fields near the walls with shrieks and shouts. In their shouts however, sounded tones of triumph; therefore, while some of the inhabitants joined the chorus, glorifying the 1 'Lord of the World, " others, indignant at this joyful noise, tried to supress it by violence. Here and there were heard wonderful and solemn hymns, sung by men in the prime of life, old men, women and children, the meaning of which they could

not understand, but in which every minute the words: "Behold the judge coming in the day of anger and disaster," were repeated. Thus the moveable and sleepless human wave

surrounded the burning city like an agitated sea.

But neither despair nor blasphemy nor songs helped. The disaster seemed to be irresistible, absolute and merciless like the Destiny. Near the Amphitheatre of Pompeius the depots of hemp and ropes took fire, of which a great deal was used for the circuses, arenas and for machines of every kind used at the games; and also the adjoining buildings containing barrels of tar with which the ropes were smeared. For afew hours the part of the town behind which the fields of Mars were located, was burning with such a bright yellow flame, that to the half-conscious, frightened spectators it seemed that with the general distraction, the order of day and night was changed, and that they saw the sunshine. But afterwards a bloody, steady blaze overpowered all the other flames. From the sea of fire, flames were discharged toward the glowing sky like gigantic fountains and pillars of flame, spreading there in fiery tassels and feathers, and the wind seized them, changed to golden threads and hair of sparks and carried them far above the Campania, toward the Albanian Mountains. The night was becoming continually lighter; even the air seemed to be saturated not only with blaze, but also with fire. The Tiber was flowing like a living fire. The unfortunate city was changed to a hell. The fire was continually spreading to new regions, captured hills by assault, flooded the level grounds, drowned the valleys, raged, clamored and thundered.

## CHAPTER II.

Macrinus, a weaver, to whose house Vinicius was carried, washed him, provided him with clothing and nourished him, after which the young tribune, recovering his strength, declared that he would start his researches for Linus that very night. Macrinus, who was a Christian, confirmed Chilo's words; that Linps, together with the high priest Clemens, went toOstrianum, where Peter should baptize whole crowds of adherents to the new faith. In that part of the city it was

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known to Christians that Linus had confided the care of his house to a certain G-ajus, two days before. For Vinicius it formed a proof that neither Lygia nor Ursus had remained at home, and must have also departed for Ostrianum.

This thought afforded him great relief. Linus'was an old man, for whom it was difficult to walk daily from the Trans-Tiber, far beyond the distant Nomentanian Gate, and from there to return again to the Trans-Tiber, so he probably lived there a few days with one of the co-adherents beyond the walls, and together with, him Lygia and Ursus. This way they escaped the fire, which did not reach the other slope of the Esquiline. Vinicius saw in all this a dispensation of Christ. He hastened to Ostrianum. He will find Lygia, he will find Linus and Peter; he will take them somewhere, to one of his estates, even to Sicilia. Rome is now burning, and in a few days only a pile of ashes will remain. Why should they then remain here among the disaster and raging population? Their troops of slaves will surround them, and they will live peacefully under the protection of Christ, blessed by Peter. Only to find them! Audit was no easy thing. Vinicius remembered with what difficulty he reached the Trans-Tiber from the Via Appia, and how he had to pass around to reach the Port Road, so now he decided to go around the city from the opposite direction. Following the Triumphal Road, it was possible to reach the Emilius' Bridge, and from there, passing Pincius, along the field of Mars, near the gardens of Pompeius, Lucullus and Sallustius, to make his -way through to the Via Nomentana. This was the shortest way, but Macrinus and Chilo did not advise him. to take it. It is true the fire did not reach this part of town, but all the market-places and streets would be competely blocked up by people and their belongings. Chilo advised to go by the way of Ager Vaticanus, to Porta Flaminia, thence to cross the river and to push on farther beyond the walls, behind the gardens of Acilius, toward the Porta Salaria. Vinicius, after a moment of hesitation agreed to this advice.

Macrinus had to stay to watch the house, but he provided two mules, which could be also useful for the further journey of Lygia. He also wanted to give a slave, but Vinicius refused, judging that the first division of pretorians met on the way will pass under his orders.

And with Chilo he started through Pagus Janiculensis

toward the Triumphal Road. Upon open spaces were camps, but they made their w'ay through them with less difficulty, for the largest part of the inhabitants were fleeing toward the sea by the Haven Road. Behind the Septimian Gate they rode between the river and the splendid gardens of Domicia, the powerful cypresses of which gleamed red from the conflagration, as from the dawn. The road was becoming clearer, but at times they had to struggle against the current of the inflowing peasantry. Vinicius was urging his mule forwarad as much as he could, and Chilo, riding right behind him, talked to himself the whole way:

"Behold (the fire left behind us which is now warming our backs. Never yet was this road so light at night. 0 Zeus! if thou wilt not let down a torrent upon this fire, it is evident thou hast no love for Rome. Human power will not extinguish this fire. Such a city, to which Greece and the whole world were serving! And now the first Greek will be able to roast' his beans in. its ashes! Who would anticipate this? And there will be no more Rome, nor Roman lords. And whoever will want to walk upon the ashes when it grows cold, and whistle—he will whistle safely. 0 gods! To whistle over such a world-ruling city! Who of Greeks or even of the barbarians could have expected this? And still one may whistle, for a heap of ashes, whether remaining from the fire of the shepherds or from the burnt city, is only a heap of ashes, which sooner or later will be dispersed by the wind."

Saying this he turned at times toward the conflagration and looked at the fiery waves with a face both angry and

joyful. Then he continued:

"It perishes! It perishes! and will be no more upon the earth. Where will the world now send its grain, its oliveoil and its money? Who will squeeze out gold and tears from it? Marble does not bum but it crumbles in fire. The Capitol-will become ruins, and also the Palatine. 0 Zeus! Rome was like a shepherd and other nations like sheep.

When the shepherd was hungry he slaughtered one of the sheep, ate the flesh, and to thee, 0 father of the gods, offered the skin. Who, 0 Cloud-Ruler, will slaughter now, and in whose hands wilt thou put the shepherds' whip? For Rome is burning, father, just as well as if thou hadst ignited it thyself with lightning."

"Hasten!" urged Vinicius—"what are you doing there?"

"I am crying over Rome, master," answered Chilo-

'such a Jupiter's city!"....

And so, for a certain time they rode in silence, listening to the roar of the fire and to the noise of bird's wings, The doves, of which vast numbers nested in the villas and at the towns of Campania, and also field-birds of every kind from over the sea and from the neighboring mountains, evidently taking the light of the conflagration for the sunlight, were flying in flocks blindly into the fire.

Vinicius first broke the silence:

"Where wert thou when the fire broke out?"

'11 was going to my friend, Euricius, master, who kept a stand near the Great Circus, and I was just musing over the doctrines of Christ, when they started to shout: "Fire!" The people gathered at the Circus to help and through curiosity, but when the flames embraced the whole Circus, and bdgan to show themselves in other places, they had to think of their own safety."

"Didst thou see men throwing torches into houses?"

"What did I not see, 0 grandson of /Eneas? I saw men clearing their way in the crowd with swords; I saw battles, and human entrails trampled upon the pavement. 0 master, if thou hadst seen that, thou wouldst judge that barbarians have captured the city and are slaughtering it. The people around shouted that the end of the world had come. Some lost their heads completely, and giving up the flight, thoughtlessly waited till the flames grasped them. Others went mad, others howled from despair, but I also saw some who howled from joy, for, 0 master, there are many bad people in the world, who do not know how to appreciate the benefits of your gentle ruling, and those just rights in virtue of which you take away from everyone whatever they have and appropriate it. The people do not know how to be reconciled with the will of the gods!"

Vinicius was too much occupied with his own thoughts tonotice the irony in the words of Chilo. A chill of terror seized him upon the thought alone that Lygia could have found herself among that tumult, on those terrible streets,, on which the human entrails were trampled upon. Therefore,, though he had asked Chilo at least ten times about everything, he turned to him once more:

"And thou hast seen them with thine eyes in Ostrianum?"

"I saw, 0 son of Venus, I saw the maiden, the good Ursus, the holy Linus and Peter the Apostle."

"Before the fire?"

"Before the fire, 0 Mitra!"

But in Vinicius' soul a doubt arose, whether Chilo was not lying, so stopping his mule he looked threateningly at the old Greek anda, sked:

"What wert thou doing there?"

Chilo became confused. It is true, like too many people, it seemed to him that together with the destruction of Rome comes also the end of the Roman rule, but in the meantime, he was face to face with Vinicius, and he remembered that Vinicius under a terrible threat has forbidden him to pry into Christian doings, and especially those of Linus and

Lygia.

"Master," said he, "why dost thou not believe me I love them? So it is! I was in Ostrianum, for I am that half-Christian. Pirrhon taught me to value virtue more than philosophy, therefore I seek more and more virtuous men. And besides, 0 master, I am poor, and while thou, **0** Jove, wert at Ancium, oftentimes I suffered from hunger over my books, therefore I used to sit at the Ostrianum wall, for the Christians, though poor themselves, distribute more alms than all other inhabitants of Rome taken together."

This reason seemed satisfactory to Vinicus, so he asked

less sternly:

" And thou dost not know where Linus is living in the meantime?"

" Once thou didst punish me severely for curiosity, O master!" answered the Greek.

Vinicius became silent and they rode on.

"Master," said Chilo after awhile, "thou wouldst not have found the maiden if not for me, but if we will find her thou wilt not forget the poor philosopher?"

"Thou wilt get a house with a vineyard at Ameriola,"

answered Vinicus.

"Thanks to thee, 0 Hercules! With a vineyard?....

Thanks to thee! O, yes! with a vineyard!"

They were now passing the heights of the Vatican, which were gleaming red from the fire, but behind the Naumachia they turned to the right in order to approach the river after

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having passed the Vatican Field, and after crossing theriver reach the Porta Flaminia. Suddenly Chilo stopped the mule and said.:

"Master, a good idea has come to my head."

"Speak!" answered Vinicius.

"Between the Janiculian Hill and the Vatican, behind the gardens of Agrippina, are undergrounds from which stones and sand were taken for the building of Nero's Circus. Listen to me, 0 master! Of late the Jews, of whom, as thou knowest, there are vast numbers in the Trans-Tiber, began to persecute the Christians. Thou rememberest that under the divine Claudius such disturbances occurred there, that Caesar was forced to drive them out from Rome. Today when they returned and when, thanks to the protection of Augusta, they feel secure, they brow-beat the Christians all the more. I know that, for I saw it. There was no edict issued against the Christians, but the Jews accuse them before the prefect of the city, that they murder children, worship an ass and proclaim a doctrine not acknowledged by the Senate, and they beat them and attack their prayer-houses so obstinately that the Christians are forced to conceal themselves before them."

" What then dost thou wish to say?" asked Vinicius.

"This, 0 master, that synagogues are existing openly in the Trans-Tiber, but the Christians, in order to evade the persecutions, have to pray in concealment and congregate in empty sheds outside the city or in arenaria. These who live in Trans-Tiber chose that one which was formed by taking sand for the building of a circus and different houses along the Tiber. Now, when the city is perishing the adherents of Christ undoubtedly are praying. We will find countless numbers of them in the quarries, therefore 1 advise thee, master, to go in there on the way."

<sup>1</sup> But thou hast said that Linus went to Ostrianum,

cried Vinicius impatiently.

\*1 And thou hast promised to me a house with a vineyard at Ameriola, "answered. Chilo; 11 therefore I wish to search for the maiden everywhere, wherever I hope to find her. After the outbreak of the fire they might have returned to Trans-Tiber.... Linus owns a house, perhaps he wished to be near his home to see whether the fire will reach that part of town. If they returned, I swear to thee, master, by Per-

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siphone, that we shall find them at prayer in the quarry, or in any event we shall find news about them."

"Thou art right, therefore lead on," said the tribune.

Chilo without reflection turned to the left, toward the hill. For a time the slope of the hill concealed the conflagration so that, although the near heights were in the light, they were in the shade. Having passed the Circus, they turned again to the left and entered a kind of ravine which was completely dark. But in this darkness Vinicus perceived swarms of gleaming lanterns.

"There they are!" said Chilo. "There will be more of

"There they are!" said Chilo. "There will be more of them to-day than ever, for the other prayer-houses are burnt down or are filled with smoke like the whole Trans-Tiber."

"Yes, I hear hymns," said Vinicius.

In fact from the dark opening human voices were singing and the lanterns vanished in it one after another. But from the side passes continually passed new forms, so that after a certain time Vinicius and Chilo found themselves among a crowd of people.

Chilo slipped down from his mule and beckoning to a

youth who was walking near, said to him:

"I am a priest of Christ and a bishop. Hold the mules for us, and thou wilt get my blessing and forgiveness of sins."

Then, without waiting for answer, he slipped the reins in his hand, and together with Vinicius he joined the crowd moving forward.

When they entered the quarry and advanced by a feeble light of the lanterns through the dark corridor, they reached a roomy cavern from which evidently stone was formerly taken, for the walls were formed from the fresh fragments.

It was lighter there than in the corridor, for besides the fire-pots and lanterns, torches were also burning. By then-light Vinicius perceived a throng of people kneeling with their hands uplifted. He could not see Lygia, nor Peter the Apostle, nor Linus, but instead, solemn faces surrounding him. In some, expectation, fear and hope were visible. The blaze was reflected in the whites of their upraised eyes, perspiration was flowing on their foreheads; some were singing hymns, others were repeating feverishly the name of Jesus, others were beating their breasts. It was apparent to all that every moment they expected something extraordinary.

Suddenly the hymns ceased and above the congregation, in the niche formed by the removal of an immense stone, appeared Crispus, known to Vinicius, with a face half conscious, pale, fanatical and stern. The eyes turned toward him as if expecting words of encouragement and hope, but he, making a sign of a cross over the congregation, began to speak in a hurried and excited voice saying:

1 'Repent your sins, for the moment had come. Behold upon the city of crime and dissolution, behold upon the new Babylon the Lord has sent down destroying flame. The hour of judgement, wrath and disaster, has come. .The Lord has foretold his coming and soon you will see Him! But He will not come like a lamb again, who offered his blood for your sins, but a terrrible judge, who in his justice will plunge into the abyss the sinful and unbelievers.... Woe to the world and woe to the sinners, for there will be no more mercy for them!... .1 see thee, Christ! The stars are falling in showers upon the earth! The sun is darkening, the earth is opening into abysses and the dead are rising, and Thou art walking amidst the sound of trumpets and troops of angels, amidst thunders and lightnings. I see and I hear Thee, 0 Christ!"

Here he became silent, and uplifting his face seemed to look at something distant. And suddenly in the quarry a dull thunder sounded, first one, then another. These were the burnt houses throughout the perishing city which began to fall with a crash. But the plurality of the Christians took those sounds for a visible proof that the terrible hour is coming, for the belief in an early coming of Christ and. in the end of the world was general among them, and now the burning of the city strengthened the belief. Therefore fear seized the congregation. Numerous voices began to repeat: "The day of judgement!.... Behold it is coming!" Some covered their faces with their hands, thinking that the earth will be shaken in its foundations, and from its depths of hell, beasts will come and throw themselves upon the sinners. Others cried: "Christ, have mercy!" "Redeemer, be merciful!".... Others loudly confessed their sins, others threw themselves into each others arms, in order to have some near hearts with them in the horrible moment.

But there were some whose faces, as if already taken to heaven were full of smiles and did not show any fear, In some places glorifying hymns were heard; other in religious excitement began to call out unintelligible word in unintelligible languages. Somebody from the dark corner of the cavern cried: 'Awake thou that sleepest!" Above all predominated the cry of Crispus: "Watch! watch!" However, at times silence was reigning as if all, holding their breaths, were waiting for what would happen. And then the distant thunder of parts of the town falling into ruin was heard, and after the silence began the groans, prayers, hymns and cries of 'Redeemer, have mercy!" At times' Crispus began to speak, and cried:

'Renounce earthly boons, for soon there will be no earth under your feet, renounce the earthly loves, for the Lord will destroy those who loved their wives and children more than Him. Woe to the one who loved a creature more-than the Creator! Woe to the powerful! Woe to the dissolute! Woe to

the sumptuous! Woe to man, woman and child!"....

Suddenly a roar stronger than the preceding shook the stone-quarry. All fell to the earth, extending their arms crosswise, in order to defend themselves with this shape from the evil spirits. Silence began, in which the accelerated breathing, full of terror, whispered: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" anti there children's cries were heard. And then, above this postrate human throng, a certain quiet voice said:

"Peace be with you!"

It was the voice of Peter the Apostle, who had entered the cavern. At the sound of his words fear passed in one moment, like the fear of a flock is passing, in the midst of which the shepherd appeared. The people arose, those nearer began to gather at his feet, as if looking for protection under his wings, and he stretched his hands over them and said:

"Why do you fear in your hearts? Who of you will guess what can befall him before the hour arrives? The The Lord punished Babylon with fire, but over you, whom the baptism purified, and whose sins the blood of the Lamb redeemed, His mercy will extend, and you will die with His name upon your lips. Peace be with you!"

After the menacing and merciless words of Crispus, the words of Peter fell like balm upon those present. Instead of fear of God, the love of God empowered itself in their

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souls. These people found again such a Christ as they learned to love from the relatings of the Apostle, consequently not a merciless judge, but as weet and patient Lamb, whose mercj<sup>r</sup> a hundredfold exceeded human wickedness. A feeling of relief seized the whole congregation, and confidence together with gratitude for the Apostle filled their hearts. Voices from different directions began to cry: "We are thy sheep, feed us!"

Those nearer him said: "Do not leave us in the day of disaster!" And they knelt at his feet, seeing which Vinicius approached and grasped the hem of Peter's cloak, and.

inclining his head, said:

"Master, help me! I have looked for her in the woke of the conflagration and among the people, and coul- not find her anywhere, but I believe thou canst return her to me."

And Peter put his hand on Vinicius' head. "Confide," said he, "and come with me."

## CHAPTER III.

' The city was still burning. The Great Circus fell into Tuins, and afterwards in those parts of the town which first started to burn, whole blocks of buildings began- to fall. After they fell, columns of flame shot up for a moment. The wind changed and was blowing now with an immense force from the sea, carrying waves of fire and firebrands to Ceelius, to Esquilinus and to Viminalis. However,-the help was already provided. By order of Tigellinus, who the third day had hurried up from Ancium, they began to pull down houses on the Esquiline, in order that the fire coming upon empty places should become suppressed by itself. That was vain help, undertaken solely for the saving of the remnants of the city, for to save that which was already burning was impossible. Besides, the further consequences of the disaster had to be prevented. Together with Rome immense riches were perishing, the whole property of all its inhabitants, so that around the walls hundreds of thousands of beggars were camping, The second day hunger began to torment that crowd of people, for the immense quantities of provisions piled up in the city were burning with it,,

and in the general confusion and dissolution of offices, no one thought of bringing new ones. Duly after the arrival of Tigellinus, corresponding words were sent to Ostia, but in the meanwhile the population began to assume a more threatening attitude.

The house at Aqua Appia, in which Tigellinus lived for a time, was surrounded by crowds of women, crying from morning till late at night, 1 ' Bread and a roof!" In vain did the pretorians, brought from the great camp located between the Via Salaria and Nomen-tana, try to maintain order. Here armed resistance was brought forth against them openly; in other places the unarmed crowds, pointing at the burning city, cried: "Murder us in view of this fire!" They cursed Caesar, the Augustians, the pretorian soldiers, and the excitement was growing every hour, so that Tigellinus, looking at night at the thousands of fires started around the city, said to himself that those were the fires of enemies' camps. By his order, besides the flour, the largest possible quantity of ready-baked bread were brought, not only from Ostia, but from every town and neighboring village, but when the first transports arrived at night at the Emporium, the mob broke the chief gate from the direction of Aventine, and in an instant grabbed all the supplies, causing a terrible disturbance. In the light of the blaze they were fighting for loaves, of which a great deal they trampled into the earth. The flour from the torn bags covered the ground from the grainary to the bows of Druzus and Germanicus, and the tumult lasted till soldiers occupied every building and began to disperse the crowds by means of arrows and missies.

Never yet since the incursion of Gauls under Brennus, did Rome meet with such a disaster. The two conflagrations were compared in dispair. But at that time, at least the Capitol remained. At present the Capitol also was surrounded by a terrible garland of flame. The marbles, true, did not burn, but at nights, when the wind momentarily divided the flames, rows of columns of the upper temple of Jove were seen, heated and gleaming like glowing coal. At the time of Brennus, Rome had a population well disciplined, holding together and attached to the city and the temples, but at present around the walls of the burning city, manytongued crowds were camping, composed largely of slaves and freedmen, raging, disorderly and ready, under the pres-

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sure of poverty to turn against the authority and the city. But the magnitude of the conflagration alone, to a certain degree, was disarming the mob. Following the disaster of the fire, could come the plague of famine and diseases, and to complete the calamity, terrible July heats began. It was impossible to breathe the air heated by the fire and the sun. Night not only failed to bring any relief, but it became a hell. In the day time a terrible and ominous view was . presented. In the center the immense city upon hills, changed into a roaring volcano, and around it reaching the Albanian Mountains, a single endless camp, composed of shanties, tents, huts, wagons, wheel-barrows, litters, stands, fires, clouded by the smoke, dust, lighted by the red rays of the sun passing the conflagration, full of noise, cries of menace, hate and terror, a monstrous expression of men, women and children. Among the Quirites, the G-re.eks, hairy people of the North, Africans and Asiatics,—among the citizens, the slaves, freedmen, gladiators, merchants, artisans, peasants soldiers, a real human sea surrounding an island of fire.

Diverse news moved this human sea, like the wind moves the water. They were favorable and unfavorable. They spoke of immense supplies of grain and clothes which should arrive at the Emporium and be distributed free. They said also that by order of Caesar the provinces in- Asia and Africa will be plundered of all the riches, and the treasures collected this way will be divided between the inhabitants of Rome, so that every one will be able to build his own house. But at the same time, news originated that the waters in the aqueducts were poisoned, and that Nero wants to destroy the city and to exterminate the inhabitants, in order to move to Greece or Egypt, and to rule the world. Each report was spread with the rapidity of lightning, and each one found belief among the mob, causing outbursts of hope, anger, fear or rage. The belief of the Christians that the end of the world through fire is near, increased among the adherents of gods more and more every day. The people were fallingin numbness or in rage. In the mist of the clouds lighted by the blaze, gods looking at the ruin of the earth were seen, and the people stretched their hands towards them, beggingmercy or cursing them.

In the meantime the soldiers, aided by certain number of inhabitants, were continually pulling down houses upon the

Esquilinus, upon the Cselius, and also in the Trans-Tiber, a larger part of which by reason of this escaped from fire. But in the city proper inexhaustible treasures were burning, which were accumulated through centuries of conquest; priceless works of art, magnificient temples and the most precious memorials of Rome's past and Rome's glory. It was foreseen that only a few parts of the whole town would be saved, and that hundreds of thousands would be without a roof. Others however were spreading the news that the soldiers were pulling down the houses, not for the prevention of the fire, but in order that nothing should remain of the city. Tigellinus implored in every letter, that Caesar should arrive and calm the despairing people with his presence. But Nero started only when the flames seized the "domus transitoria," and hurried so as not to miss the moment in which the conflagration reached its summit.

#### CHAPTER IV.

The fire meantime had reached the Via Nomentana, and from there, with the change of wind, it turned toward the Via Lata and the Tiber, surrounded the Capitol, flooded the Forum Boarium and destroying everything it passed in the first impetus, again approached the Palatine.

Tigellinus, gathering the whole force of pretorians, sent messenger after messenger to the approaching Cæsar, with with the declaration that he will miss nothing from the magnificence of the spectacle, for the conflagration increases.

But Nero wished to arrive at night, so that he would have a better view of the perishing city. Therefore he stopped in the neighborhood of Aqua Albana, and calling to his tent the tragedian Aliturus, he arranged with his help the attitude, countenance, look, and learned corresponding gestures—obstinately striving with him whether at the words, "O sacred city, which seemed more lasting than Ida," he should uplift both hands, or, holding the ) forminga in one hand, to drop it along the body and only raise the other hand. And this question seemed to him more important than all others. Finally starting at dusk, he asked Petronius' opinion, whether in the verse dedicated to the disaster, he should not

insert a few magnificent blasphemies against the gods, and whether those blasphemies, from the standpoint of art, should not break out from the lips of a man in his position losing his home.

About midnight he at last approached the walls, together with his mighty court, composed of whole troops of courtesans, senators, knights, freedmen, slaves, women and children. Sixteen thousand pretorians, arranged in battle order along the road, were guarding the peace and safety of his entry, keeping the excited people at a proper distance. The people, it is true, were cursing, shouting and whistling at the sight of the train, but dared not to attack it. In many places, however, applause was heard given by the mob, which being homeless, did not lose anything in the fire, and expected more liberal distribution of grain, olive-oil, clothes and money. At last the sounds of trumpets and horns, which Tigellinus ordered to blow, deafened the shouts and whistlings as well as the applause. Nero, after passing the Ostian Gate, stopped for a while and said: "Homeless ruler of a homeless nation, where shall I lay my unlucky head for the night?" After which, passing Clivus Delphini, he ascended steps prepared for him upon the Appian aqueduct, and following him were the Augustians and a chorus of singers, carrying cithras, lutes and other musical instruments.

And all held their breath, waiting whether he would pronounce some great words, which had to be remembered for the sake of their own safety. But he stood solemn and speechless, clad in a purple cloak and a garland of golden laurels, looking at the raging power of the flames. When Terpnos handed him a golden lute, he raised his eyes to the illumi-

nated sky as if waiting for an inspiration.

The people from afar pointed with their hands at him. In the distance serpents of flames were hissing, devouring the most sacred eternal relics; the temple of Hercules was burning, erected by Evander, and the temple of Jupiter Stator, and the temple of Luna built in the times of Servius Tullius, and the house of Numa Pompilius, and the temple of Vesta with the penates of the Roman people; thi'ough the flames the Capitol appeared at times—the past soul of Roine was burning—and he, Caesar, stood there with a lute in his hand, with the face of a tragic playwright, thinking not

about the perishing homes, but about the attitude and pathetic words with which to best paint the greatness of the disaster, to rouse the greatest admiration and to obtain

the warmest applause.

He hated this city, he hated its inhabitants, he loved but his songs and verses, therefore he was glad at heart that he saw at last a tragedy like the one he was describing. The rhymster felt happy, the declaimer felt inspired, the seeker of emotions satiated himself with the terrible spectacle, and was thinking with delight that even the destruction of Troy was nothing in comparison with the destruction of this gigantic city. What else could he wish? Behold Rome, wold-ruling Rome, is ,burnin<sub>6</sub> and he stands upon the arches of the aqueduct with a golden lute in his hand, admired, magnificent and poetic. Somewhere below, in the darkness, the people murmur and rage. But let them murmur. Ages will pass by, thousands of years will pass, and the people will remember and glorify this poet who, in such a night sung about the fall and the conflagration of Troy. What is Homer in comparison with him? What is Apollo himself with his hollow forminga? Here raising his hands and striking the strings, he sang the words of Priam:

## "O nest of my fathers, O dear cradle I"

His voice in the open air, in the roar of the fire and the distant noise of a crowd of thousands, seemed astonishingly feeble, trembling and weak, and the sound of the accompaniment was like the buzzing of a fly, but the senators, officers and the Augustians assembled upon the aqueduct inclined their heads, listening in silent ecstacy. He sang for a long time and his tune was more and- more sad. At the moments when he interrupted to catch breath the chorus of singers repeated the last verses, after which Nero again threw the tragic syrma from his shoulder with a gesture learned from Aliturus, struck the strings and continued tosing. Having at last finished the song previously composed he began to improvise, seeking grand comparisons in the view which was spread before hirfi, and his face began tochange. Not the destruction of his birth city moved him, but he was intoxicated and moved by the pathos of his own words to such an extent that he suddenly dropped the lute to his feet, and wrapping himself in the syrma he stood

there as if petrified, similar to one of those statues of Niobides which ornamented the courtyard of the Palatine.

After a short duration of silence a storm of applause burst forth. But from the distance the howling of the crowds answered it. Nobody doubted any longer that it was Caesar who gave the order to burn the city, to afford himself an opportunity to sing songs to it. Nero, hearing that cry of hundreds of thousands of voices, turned to the Augustians with a sad smile full of the resignation of a man who is wronged and said:

"Behold how the Quirites know how to appreciate me

and poetry."

"Scoundrels!" answered Vatinius, "Order the pretorians to attack them."

Nero turned to Tigellinus:

"Can I rely on the loyalty of the soldiers?"

""Yes, godlike!" answered the prefect. But Petronius shrugged his shoulders.

"On their loyalty but not on their number," he said. 'Remain meanwhile where thou art, for it is safest here, and

the people have to be quieted."

Of the same opinion was also Seneca and the consul Licinius. In the meantime below the tumult was increasing. The people armed themselves with stones, tent poles, boards from wagons and wheel-barrow's, and with various iron-ware. After a time a few of the chiefs of cohorts came with the announcement that the pretorians, pressed by the mob, maim tained the line of battle only with their utmost effort, and not having received a command to attack they did not know what to doj

"Gods!" said Nero, "what a night! The conflagration on

one side and a raging sea and mob on the other."

And he continued to seek expressions which would most grandly describe the dangers of the moment, but seeing pale faces and uneasy looks, he also became frightened.

"Give me a dark cloak with a hood," he eried. "Would

it really come to a battle?"

"Lord," said Tigellinus in an uncertain voice, "I have done all I could, but the danger is threatening.... Make a speech to the people and offer them promises."

"Caesar should speak to a mob? Let somebody else do

it in my name. Who will undertake it?"

"if" answered Petronius calmly.

"Go, my friend; thou art the most faithful to me on every occasion. Go, and spare no promises."

Petronius turned toward the retinue with a face careless

and sneering:

"The senators present here," he said, "and Piso, Nerva

and Senecio will go with me."

Then he descended slowly from the aqueduct and those Whom he had called followed him, not without hesitation but with some confidence, which his calmness imparted to them. Petronius halted at the base of the arcade and ordered a white horse brought to him, and mounting it, rode on in front of his companions through the deep ranks of the pretorians towards the dense, howling masses, unarmed, having in his hand a thin ivory cane, with which he supported himself. And he pushed his horse into the crowds when he reached them. Around, in the light of the conflagration, upraised hands were visible, armed with weapons of every kind, inflamed eyes, sweating faces and roaring, foaming lips. The raging waves at once surrounded him and the retinue, and behind them was visible a sea of heads, movable, boiling, f horrible.

The shrieks increased and changed to an inhuman roar. Poles, forks and even swords waved above the head of Petronius; rapacious hands were extended to the reins of his horse and toward himself, but he continued to ride further and further, calm, indifferent, despising. At times he struck the more impertinent on their heads' with his cane as he would make his way in an ordinary throng, and his confidence and calmness astonished the raging mob. He was recognized at last, and numerous voices began to shout.

recognized at last, and numerous voices began to shout:
"Petronius!" "Arbiter Elegantiarum!" "Petronius!"

"Petronius!" sounded from all sides.

And the faces around were getting less menacing as this name was repeated, the shrieks less furious, for that gaudy patrician, though he never endeavored to gain the favor of the people, was nevertheless their favorite. He was considered a humane and liberal man and his popularity had increased, especially since the case of Pedanius Secundus, in which he spoke for the allaying of a cruel decree condemning all the slaves of the prefect to death. Especially the masses of slaves loved him since then with that unbounded

love with which men oppressed and unfortunate love those who show them even a little feeling. Besides, there was in the present moment curiosity to know what the messenger of Caesar will say, for no one doubted that Caesar had sent him purposely.

Petronius, removing his white toga edged with a scarlet border, raised it and began to swing it around his head as

a sign that he wished to speak.

"Silence! Silence!" was shouted from all sides.

After a while they became quiet. Then he straightened himself on his horse and began to speak in a clear, calm voice:

"Citizens! Let those who hear me repeat my words to those who are standing further back, and all of you behave like men and not like the beasts in the arenas."

< 'We listen! We listen!'

"Then listen! The city will be rebuilt. The gardens of Lucullus, Mecenas, Caesar and Agrippina will be opened for you. From to-morrow on will begin the distribution of grain, wine and olive oil, so that each one wilt be able to fill himself up to his throat. Afterwards Caesar will prepare for you spectacles such as the world has not seen, at which feasts and presents will be waiting for you. You will be richer after the fire than before it."

A murmur answered him, which spread from the center in all directions like the waves upon the water in which somebody has thrown a stone. Those nearer repeated his words to those more distant. Then here and there were

heard shouts of anger or approval, which changed finally to ope immense shout:

"Panem et circenses!"

Petronius wrapped himself in his toga and for some time listened motionless, similar in his white garb to a marble statue. The shout was increasing, it deadened the squnds of the fire, and' sounded from all directions, but the messenger evidently had something further to say for he was waiting.

And at last again ordering silence by his uplifted hand,

he shouted:

'I promise panem et circenses to you, and now give out a shout in honor of Caesar, who feeds and clothes you, after which go to sleep, for the dawn will soon begin."

Having said this he turned his horse, and striking lightly with his cane the heads and faces of those who stood in his

way, he slowly rode toward the lines of pretorians.

Very soon he was under the aqueduct. Above he found almost a panic. The shout, "Panem et circenses," was not understood there, and they thought it was a new outburst of rage. They did not expect even that Petronius would save himself, therefore Nero, perceiving him, ran to the steps and, with his face pale from excitement, asked.

'And what—what is going on there? Is there a. battle

already?"

Petronius breathed deeply and answered.

"By Pollux! they are perspiring and stinking! Let somebody- hand me an epilimma or I will faint."

Then he turned to Csesar:

"I promised them," he said, "grain, olive oil, opening of the gardens and spectacles. They worship thee again and shout with parched lips in thy honor. O gods! what a disagreeable smell these plebeians emit."

"I had the pretorians ready," called out Tigellinus, "and if thou hadst not pacified them the shouters would be silenced forever. It is a pity, Ciesar, that thou didst not permit me

to use force."

Petronius looked at the speaker, shrugged his shoulders, and said.

"This is not ended yet. May be thou wilt have to use it to-morrow."

'No, no!" said Caesar, "I will order grain distributed among them and open the gardens.' Thanks to thee, Petronius. I will prepare the spectacles, and this song which I sang-to you to-day I will sing in public."

Saying this he placed his hand on the shoulder of Petronius, was silent for a moment, and finally, recovering, asked:

1 'Say sincerely, how didst thou find me when I was sing-

'Thou wert worthy of the sight, as the sight was worthy of thee," answered Petronius.

Then he turned toward the conflagration.

"But let us observe it," he said, "and let us take leave of old Rome."

#### CHAPTER V.

The words of the Apostle poured confidence into the souls of the Christians. The end of the world seemed near to them, but they began to believe that the terrible judgment will not take place immediately. That perhaps they will see the end of Nero's reign, which they considered the reign of Antichrist, and the punishment for his crimes which were calling for vengeance. So, strengthened at heart, they began to disperse from the quarry, having finished their prayers, and to return to their temporary shelters and even to the Trans-Tiber, for news arrived that the fire, incended there in a number of places, with the change of the wind turned to the river again, and having destroyed what it eould, ceased to spread.

The Apostle in company of Vininus, and Chilo who was following them, also left the quafry. The young tribune dared not interrupt his prayers, so for some time he walked silently with his eyes only beseeching mercy and trembling from excitement. But many persons were coming to kiss the hands and the edge of the Apostle's garment; mothers held out their children toward him; others kneeled down in the dark, long passage and raising their lanterns they begged for a blessing, and others walking alongside were singing, so that there was no proper time for a question nor an answer. So it was in the ravine. When they reached a wider space, from which the burning city was seen, the Apostle made the

sign of the cross three times; then to Vinicius he said:

<sup>11</sup> Do not fear; a cottage of a ditch-digger is near in which we will find Lygia with Linus, and the faithful servant.

Christ, who intended her for thee, preserved her."

Vinicius reeled and leaned with his hand on a rock. The road from Ancium, the events under the walls, researches after Lygia in the midst of hot smoke, sleeplessness and a terrible uneasiness about her, had exhausted his strength, and the news that she was near and that he will see her soon weakened him. A weakness suddenly seized him to such an extent that he dropped to the Apostle's feet, and embracing his knees was not able to say a word.

The Apostle, defending himself from his thanks and honor,

said:

"Not to me, not to me, but to Christ."
"What a papital deity!" said the voice of Chilo from behind. '1' But 1 don't know what to do with the mules which are waiting there."

"Rise and come with me," said Peter, taking the young

man by his hand.

Vinicius arose. By the light of the blaze tears were seen flowing down his face pale from emotion. His lips trembled as if he was praying.

"Let us go," he said. But Chilo repeated again:

Master, what shall I do with the mules which are waiting? Perhaps this worthy prophet will prefer to ride rather than to walk?"

Vinicius himself did not know what to answer, but hearing from Peter that the cottage of the ditch-digger is very near, answered:

"Lead the mules back to Macrinus."

Beg thy pardon, master, but I will remind thee of the house in Ameriola. In the presence of such an awful conflagration it is easy to forget a thing so slight."

" Thou wilt receive it."

< '0, grandson of Unma Pompilius, I was always certain, but now when I have heard the promise, as did this magnanimous Apostle, I even don't remind thee that thou hast promised me a vineyard. Pax vobiscum. I will find thee, master. Pax vobiscum."

And they answered:

"And with thee."

Then they turned to the right toward the hills. On the

way Vinicius said:

Master, wash me with the water of baptism in order that I shall be able to call myself a true confessor of Christ, for I love Him with all the strength of my soul. Wash me soon, for at heart I am ready. And I shall do whatever I shall be ordered to do; but tell me, what more can I do?"

"Love people as thy brothers," answered the Apostle,

"for only with love canst thou serve Him."

"Yes, I understand it already and feel it. When a child I believed in those Roman gods, but I did not love them, but this one I love, so that gladly would I give my life for Him."

And he Degan to look into the sky repeating with ecstasy:

"For He is the only God. For He alone is good and merciful. Therefore, if not only this city but the whole world would be perishing, I shall stand by Him alone, and Him alone will I confess."

"And He will protect thee and thy home," finished the

In the meantime they entered another ravine, at the end of which a dim light was seen. Peter pointed to it with his hand and said:

"There is the cottage of the digger who gave us shelter when returning from Ostrianum with the sick Linus. We

could not make our way to the Trans-Tiber."

Soon they reached it. The cottage was a cavern, hollowed out in a bending of the mountain, and constructed from clay and reeds. The door was clbsed, but through the opening which served for the window was seen the interior, lighted by a fire:

Some dark, gigantic figure rose to meet them and began

to ask:

"Who are you?"

"Servants of Christ," answered Peter. "Peace be with thee Ursus."

Ursus bent to the Apostles' knees, then recognizing Vinicius, he grasped his hand and raised it to his lips.

"And thou, master?" he said—"The name of the Lamb

be blessed for the joy which thou wilt bring to Lygia."

Saying this he opened the door and they entered, The sick Linus was lying on a bed of straw with an emaciated face and a forehead as yellow as ivory. By the fire sat Lygia, holding in her hand a string of small fish, evidently

intended for supper.

Being occupied with removing some of the fish from the string, and thinking that Ursus was entering, she did not raise her eyes at all. But Vinicius, approaching and pronouncing her name, extended his hands to her. Then she rose quickly. A flash of astonishment and joy came over her face, and without a word, like a child who finds its father or mother after days of fear and disaster, she threw herself in his open arms.

And he embraced her and for some time was pressing her to his bosom, with such a rapture as if ' she were miracu-

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lously saved. His joy simply had no bounds, just like his

love and happiness.

At last he began to relate to her how he hurried from Ancium, how he looked for her under the walls and in the midst of the smoke, in the house of Linus, how much he had suffered and feared, and what he endured before he met

the Apostle.

"But now," he said, "since I have found thee, I shall not leave thee amidst the fire and those raging crowds. The people are murdering one another under the walls, the slaves are revolting and plundering, God alone knows what other disasters may come to Rome. But I shall save the and all of you. Oh, my dear!.... Do you want to go with me to Ancium? There we shall board a ship and go to Sicily. My lands are your lands, my houses are your houses. Listen to me! In Sicily we shall find Aulus, I shall return thee to Pomponia and I shall take thee afterwards from her as my wife. Thou dost not fear me anymore? I have not yet been baptized, but ask Peter whether moment ago while coming to thee, I did not tell him that I wished to be a real confessor of Christ and whether I did not ask him to baptize me even in this diggers' cottage. Confide in me."

Lygia was listening to those words with a radiant face. The Christians before were persecuted by the Jews, and now by reason of the fire and the confusion caused by the disaster, were living in disquiet and fear. Departure to the peaceful Sicily would put an end to all the disturbances, and would at the same time open a new epoch of happiness in their lives. If Vinicius would wish to take only Lygia, she would certainly resist the temptation, not wishing to abandon Peter the Apostle and Linus, but Vinicius said to them: 'Go with me! My lands are your lands, my

houses are your houses!"

Therefore kissing his hand as a sign of obedience, she

said: "Thy hearth is mine."

After which, ashamed that she spoke those words, which by Roman custom, were spoken only by the brides at the wedding ceremony, she blushed deeply, and she stood there in the light of the fire, with her head downcast, uncertain whether her words will not be taken wrongly. But in Vinicius' countenance only a boundless admiration was visible. He afterwards turned to Peter and said:

"Rome burns by the order of Csesar. In Ancium he was complaining that he never saw a large conflagration. But if he did not shrink from such a crime, think what may happen. Who knows whether, collecting his armies, he will not order the inhabitants to be slaughtered? Who knows what orders will follow, who knows whether after the disaster of fire—a disaster of a civil war, murders and famine will not take place? Save yourself then and let us save Lygia. There you will wait through the storm in quietude, and when it will pass you will return again to save your grain."

Outside, from the direction of Ager Vaticanus, as if confirming the words of Vinicius, some distant shouts were heard, full of fury and horror. In the same' moment came the stone-digger, owner of the cottage, and closing the door

hastily called out:

"The people are murdering each other near the Circus of Nero. The slaves and the gladiators are attacking the citizens."

"Do you hear?" said Vinicius.

"The measure is becoming full," said the Apostle, "and there will be disasters like a sea—inexhaustible."

Then he turned to Vinicius, and pointing to Lygia he said:

"Take this girl, who was intended for thee by God, and save her, and let Linus, who is sick, and Ursus go with you."

But Vinicius, who learned to love the Apostle with the

whole strength of his violent soul, said:

"I swear to thee, teacher, that I shall not abandon thee here for destruction."

"And the Lord will bless thee for thy wish," said the Apostle, ' but didst thou not hear that Christ repeated to me thrice by the lake, Feed my lambs?"

Vinicius was silent.

"So if thou, to whom nobody entrusted the care over me, sayest that thou wilt not leave me here for perdition, how dost thou desire that I should abandon my flock in the day of-disaster? When there was a storm on the lake and we feared disaster, He did not abandon us; how then can I, a servant, not follow the example of my Lord?"

Suddenly Linus raised his emaciated face and asked:

"And how can I afford not to follow thy example, 0 vicar of the Lord?"

Vinicius began to pass his hand over his head as if he were struggling with himself or fighting with his thoughts, and then, seizing the hand of Lygia, he said with a voice in

which quivered the energy of a Roman soldier:

"Listen to me, Peter, Linus, and thou, Lygia! I said what my human reason ordered, but you have another one, which cares not for your own danger, but for the commandments of the Saviour. Yes, I did not understand this and I erred, for the cataract is not yet removed from my eyes, and the former nature awakens in me. But as I love Christ and wish to be His servant, though to me it means more than the danger of my own head, here I kneel before you, and I swear that I also will fulfill the commandment of love, and will not abandon my brothers in the day of disaster."

Saying this, he kneeled down,, and an ecstasy seized him suddenly; he raised his eyes and his hands and began to

call:

"Do I understand Thee already, 0 Christ? Am I worthy of Thee?"

His hand was trembling, his eyes were glistening with tears, a fever of faith and love was shaking him—and Peter the 'Apostle took a clay amfora with water and approaching him solemnly said:

"Behold I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son

and Holy Ghost. Amen."

Then a religious ecstasy seized every one present. It seemed to them that the cottage was filled with some heavenly light, that they heard some heavenly music, that the rock walls of the caverns open above their heads, that swarms of angels are coming down from the heavens, and far up there a cross and pierced hands blessing them were seen.

Outside in the meanwhile the shouts of fighting men and the roar of flames of the burning city were heard.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Camps were pitched in the magnificent gardens of Caesar, of Domicia and Agrippina, on the Field of Mars, in the gardens of Pompeius, Sallustus and Maecenas. The por-

ticos were occupied, also the buildings intended for the ballgames, luxurious summer-houses, and sheds erected for wild beasts. Peacocks, flamingoes, swans and ostriches, gazelles and antelopes from Africa, deer and roe, which had served to ornament the gardens, went under the knife of the mob. Provisions from Ostia were coming in so abundantly that upon the floats and vessels of different varieties one could walk from one side of the Tiber to the other as over a bridge. Wheat was distributed at the unheard of low price of three sestertia, and completely free to the poorer ones. Immense supplies of wine, olive oil and chestnuts were brought; every day herds of oxen and sheep were driven by. Beggars who before the lire used to hide in the alleys of Subura and in ordinary times suffered from hunger, now lived better than before. The dread threat of famine had absolutely vanished, but it was more difficult toprevent robberies, plundering and abuses. The nomadic life insured impunity to the cut-throats, the more so as they proclaimed themselves admirers of Caesar and were not sparing in applause to him wherever he appeared. And as the offices by the force of events were suspended, and moreover as there was not enough armed power which could prevent the insubordinacy, in the city inhabited by the filth of the whole world at that time, things surpassing human imagination were occuring. Every night battles, murders, seizures of women and boys were taking place. Near the Porta Mugionis, where there were quarters for the herds driven from Campania, fights occurred in which hundreds of people were killed. Every morning on the banks of the Tiber drowned bodies, which nobody buried and which, decomposing quickly by reason of heat increased by the fire, were filling the air with stinking exhalations. Diseases broke out in the camps and the more timid foresaw a great

And the city was still burning. On the sixth day the fire, coming upon empty spaces of the Esquiline, where an enormous number of houses were destroyed purposely, began to weaken. But the piles of burning coals were gleaming so forcibly that people did not want to believe that the calamity was at an end. In fact, on the seventh night the fire broke, out with fresh vigor in the houses of Tygellinus, but on account of the lack of nourishment it did not last long.

Only houses which were burnt through were falling here and there, sending up tongues of flames and columns of sparks. But slowly the ruins glowing within began to darken on the surface. The sky after sunset ceased to gleam with a bloody blaze, and at nights 'only the blue tongues issuing from the heaps of coals were seen leaping from the black waste.

Of the fourteen parts of Rome only four remained, including the Trans-Tiber. The rest was devoured by the flames. When at last the heaps of coals turned to ashes, there was seen from the Tiber to the Esquiline, an immense gray space, sad, lifeless, upon which rows of chimneys protruded like tombstones in a graveyard. Between those columns in the day time gloomy crowds of people were prowling, searching now for precious things, now the bones of those near to them. At nights dogs were howling on the debris of former houses.

All the liberality and help which Cmsar showed to the people did not keep back imprecautions and revolting. The tribes of robbers, cut-throats and homeless beggars, who could eat and drink their fill, and plunder, were the only ones satisfied. But people who had lost the dearest persons and their property were not reconciled by the opening of the gardens, nor by the distribution of grain, nor by the promise of spectacles and gifts. The calamity was too great and unheard of: Others, in whom there was a spark of love for the -city, were brought to dispair by the knowledge that the old name "Rome" shall disappear from the surface of the earth; and that Caesar intends to erect from the ashes a new city, under the name of Neropolis. A wave of ill-will swelled and grew daily, and despite the flatteries of the Augustians, despite the falsehoods of Tygellinus, Nero, sensitive as none of the preceding Caesars to the favor of the mob, was thinking with fear that in the battle for life or death which he was carrying'on with the patricians and the senate, he might lack support. The Augustians themselves were not less alarmed, for each day could bring peril to them. Tigellinus was thinking about summoning a few legions from Asia Minor. Vatinius, who laughed even when slapped on the face, had lost his humor; Vitelius had lost his appetite.

Some were consulting with each other as how to avert the danger, for it was secret to nobody that if an outbreak would take away Caesar, not one of the Augustians would 'save his life with the exception, perhaps, of Petronius. For to their influence was the madness of Nero ascribed, all the crimes committed at their instigations. The hate against them was even stronger than against Nero.

Therefore they began to think how to free themselves of the responsibility for the burning of the city. But, in order to free themselves of it, they had to clear Caesar from suspicions, for otherwise nobody would believe that they are not the ones who caused the disaster. Tygellinus was consulting with Domicius Afra upon this, and even with Seneca, though he hated him. Poppaea, knowing also that the peril of Nero would be her own condemnation, asked for opinion of her confidants, and of Hebrew priests, for it was generally supposed that for a number of years she confessed the fath of Jehova. Nero was finding ways of his own, often horrible ones, but frequently foolish, and alternately was falling in fear, amusing himself childishly, and above all was complaining.

Once in a house of Tiberius, which was saved from the fire, a long and fruitless counsel took place. Petronius was of the opinion that, giving up troubles, they should depart to Greece, and afterwards to Egypt and Asia Minor. Besides, the journey was planned a long time ago; why then

delay when it is dangerous to stay in Rome?

Caesar accepted the advice with enthusiasm, but Seneca, after having thought a while, said-

"It is easy to go, but to return would be more difficult."

"By Hercules!" answered Petronius, "it is possible to return at the head of Asiatic legions."

"So I will do it!" cried Nero.

But Tigellinus began to oppose. He could not suggest anything himself and if the thought of Petronins had come to his mind he undoubtedly would proclaim it the saving one, but with him it was that Petronius should not again be the only one who, in dangerous moments, knew how to save everything and all

"Listen tome, godlike!" he said, "the advice, is fatal. Before thou wilt reach Ostia a civil war will begin; who-knows whether some of the living descendents of the divine Augustus will not proclaim himself Caesar, and then what

shall we do if the legions take his part?"

"We shall do this," answered Nero, "first of all we shall take care that there should be lack of Augustus' descendents. There are not many of them, so it is easy to get rid of them."

"It is possible to do this but are they the only ones concerned? My men, not later than yesterday, heard in the throng that a Caesar should be such a man as Traseas."

Nero bit his lips. But he raised his eyes and said:

'I Insatiable and ungrateful. They have enough wheat and coal upon which to bake cakes; what else do they want?"

To this Tygellinus answered:

<sup>11</sup> Revenge. "

A silence began. Suddenly Csesar arose, elevated his hand and began to declaim:

"The hearts call for vengeance: the vengeance—a victim." And then forgetting everything he cried with his face

uplifted:

"Let them give me the tablets and the stilus, that I should write this verse. Lucanus never composed the like. Bid you notice that I found it in a twinkling of an eye?"

"O, incomparable!" said a number of voices.

Nero wrote down the verse and said: "Yes, the vengeance wants a victim."

Then looking at those surrounding him, proceeded:

"But suppose we start the rumor that it was Valinius who commanded the city burned and sacrifice him to the anger of the people?"

"0 godlike! Who am I?" cried Valinius.

"True. One greater than thou is necessary—Vitelius?"

Vitelius grew pale but began to laugh.

"My fat," he said, "could start the fire anew."

But Nero was looking for a victim who could really satisfy the anger of the people, and he found him.
"Tygellinus," he said, "thou hast burned down Rome!"

A shudder ran through those present. They understood that Ciesar ceased to jest this time, and that a moment pregnant with events is approaching.

But the face of Tygellinus contracted like a jaw of a dog

read}7 to bite.

"I burned down Rome at thy command," he said.

And they began to glare at each other like two demons. Such a silence followed that the buzzing of flies which were 'flying through the atrium was heard.

"Tygellinus," said Nero, "dost thou love me?"

"Thou knowest, master." "Sacrifice thyself for me!"

"O, godlike Caesar," answered Tygellinus, "why dost thou give me a sweet beverage which I am not permitted toraise to my lips? The people are muttering and revolting;, dost thou wish that the pretorians also should begin torevolt?"

A feeling of horror compressed the hearts of those present. Tygellinus was the prefect of the pretorians and his words simply had the meaning of a threat. Nero himself understood it and a paleness covered his face.

Suddenly Epafrodyt, a freedman of Caesar, entered with the announcement that the divine Augusta desires to see-Tygellinus, for she with her people ought to be heard by the-

prefect.

Tygellinus bowed to Caesar and went out with a calm and and despising face. Now when they wanted to strike him he showed his teeth; he gave them to understand who he is, and knowing the cowardice of Nero he was confident that the world-ruler will never dare to raise his hand against him.

Nero sat silently for a while, but seeing that those present.

expected some word from him said:

"I fostered a serpent in my bosom."

Petronius shrugged his shoulders, as if he wished to say that it is not difficult to tear off the head from such a serpent.

"What wilt thou say? Speak, advise!" cried Nero, perceiving his motion—"I confide in thee alone, for thou hast-

more brains than all of them, and thou lovest me!"

Petronius had already on his lips: "Create me prefect of the pretorians and I will deliver Tygellinus to the people and pacify the city inside of one day." But his inborn laziness got the best of him. To be prefect meant properly to carry upon his shoulders the person of Caesar and thousands of public affairs. And should he undertake this work? Is it not better to read in the voluminous library, to inspect urns and statues, and holding upon his bosom the divine body of Eunice, arranging her golden hair, to press his lips to her ruby lips? Therefore he said:

"I advise the journey to Achaea."

"Ah," answered Nero, "I expected something more-from thee. The Senate hates me. If I will go, who will

guarantee that they will not revolt against me and proclaim somebody else Caesar? The people were faithful to me formerly, but to-day they will follow the Senate. By Hades! If this Senate and this people had but one head!"

"Permit me to say, godlike, that, wishing to retain Rome, thou hast to preserve at least a few Romans," said

Petronius with a smile.

But Nero began to complain.

"What are Rome and the Romans to me? I would be obeyed in Achaea. Here treason alone surrounds me. All desert me; and you are ready to betray me. I know it, I know! You don't think even what after ages will say of you if you desert such an artist as I."

Here he struck his forehead suddenly and cried:

"True! .. . . Amidst these afflictions I also forget who I am."

Saying this he turned toward Petronius with a radiant

face.

<sup>11</sup> Petronius, "he said, <sup>11</sup> the people are murmuring, but if I would take a lute and go to the Mars' Field, if I would sing to them that song which I sang to you at the time of the conflagration, dost thou not think that I would move them with my singing like Orpheus used to move wild beasts?"

To this answered Tullio Senecio, who was in a hurry to return to his slave girls, brought from Ancium, and who was impatient for some time.

"Undoubtedly, 0 Caesar, if they would permit thee to

begin."

"Let us go to Hellas!" cried Nero, impatiently. But at same instant Poppaea entered and Tygellinus followed her. The eyes of those present involuntarily turned to him, for never had a triumphator entered the Capitol with such a haughtiness, with which he stopped before Caesar.

Then he began to speak slowly and clearly, with a voice

which sounded like the clang of iron:

"Listen to me, 0 Caesar, for I can say to you: I found! The people need vengeance and a victim—not a single one, but hundreds and thousands. Didst thou ever hear, 0 master, who was Christos, he who was crucified by Pontius Pilatus? And dost thou know who the Christians are? Did not I tell thee of their crimes and their infamous ceremonies,

Of their predictions that fire will bring the end' to the world? The people hate them and suspect them. No one saw them in the temples, for they consider our gods evil spirits; they are not at Stadium, for they despise the games. Never did the palms of a Christian honor thee with applause. Never did any one of them recognize thee as a god. They are enemies of the human race, enemies of the city and of thee. The people murmur against you, but it was not thou, O Caesar, who ordered me to burn down Rome, and it washot I who burned it. The people desire vengeance, let them have it. The people desire blood and spectacles, let them have them. The people suspect thee, let their suspicions turn to another direction."

Nero was listening at first with astonishment. But as Tygellinus continued his actor's face began to change and to assume alternately the expressions of anger, sorrow, sympathy, indignation. Suddenly he arose, and throwing down his toga, which slipped to his feet, he stretched upwards both hands and for some time remained silent.

Finally he said in the voice of a tragedian:

"' 0, Zeus, Apollo, Hero, Atene, Persephone and you all, immortal gods, why did you not come to our aid? What did this unfortunate city do to those cruel men that they burn it so inhumanely?"

1 'They are the enemies of the human race and of thee,"

said Poppaea.

And others began to shout:

"Do justice! Punish the incendiaries! Gods themselves

wish revenge."

But he sat down, dropped his head on his breast and became silent again, as if the wickedness of which he heard had deafened him. But after awhile he shook his hands and cried:

"What punishments and what tortures are worthy of such crimes?.... But the gods will inspire me, and with the help of the powers of the Tartar I will give such a spectacle to my poor people that they will remember me for ages with, gratitude."

Petronius became suddenly pale. He thought of the danger which hangs over Lygia, over Vinicius whom he loved, and over all those people whose doctrine he rejected, but of whose innocence he was convinced. He also thought that -one of those bloody orgies, which his esthetic eyes could not look upon, will begin. But first of all he told himself: "I have to help Vinicius, who will go crazy if that girl perishes." And this consideration outweighed all others, for Petronius was well aware that he is about to begin a dangerous game.

However he began to talk freely and carelessly, as he usually talked when criticising or deriding insufficiently

esthetical ideas of Caesar and the Augustians.

"So you have found victims. Good! You can send them to the arenas or dress them in the \* painful tunics. ' Good, also! But listen to me: You have the power, you have the pretorians, you have the strength, then be sincere at least when nobody hears you. Deceive the people, but not yourselves. Deliver the Christians to the people, condemn them to any tortures you like, but have the courage to say to yourself that they were not the ones who burned Rome. You call me 'arbiter elegantiarum, 'therefore I declare to you that I do not suffer miserable comedies. Fie! Oh, how all this reminds me of the theatrical booths near the Porta Asinaria, in which the actors play as gods and kings to the delight of the gaping crowd, and after the play they wash down onions with sour wine or receive a clubbing. Be indeed gods and kings, for I say that you are able to afford it. Concerning thyself, 0 Caesar, thou hast menaced us with the condemnation of after ages, but think that they will also pronounce a sentence regarding thee. By the divine Clio! Nero the world-ruler, Nero-god-burned down Rome, for he was as powerful upon the earth, as Zeus in Olympus. Nero-poet-loved poetry to such an extent that he sacrificed his home to it. From the beginning of the world nobody dared anything like this. I entreat thee, in the name of the nine Libetrides, do not renounce such a glory, for songs of thee will sound till the end of ages. What will Priam be alongside of thee? What, Agamemnon? What, Achilles? What, gods themselves? Never mind whether the burning of Rome is a good thing but it is a great and extraordinary thing. Besides, I tell thee that the people will not raise their hands against thee. That is not true. Have courage. Beware of deeds unworthy of thyself, for this alone threatens thee: that after ages may say, "Nero burned down Rome, but like a pusillanimous Caesar,

and like a timorous poet, he disowned the great deed from

fear and put the guilt on the innocent."

Petronius'words usually produced strong impressions on Nero, but this time Petronius himself was not deceiving himself, for he knew that what he said is the last means which, might in a lucky event save the Christians but might ruin himself most easily. However, he did not hesitate, for Vinicius whom he loved and a hazard which amused him was concerned here. "The dice are cast," he said, "and we will see how much the fear for his own skin will outweigh the love of glory in this monkey." And in his soul he did not doubt that fear would gain the day.

Meantime, after his words silence reigned. Poppaea and all present were looking into Nero's eyes as into a rainbow, who began to raise his lips, nearing them to his very nostrils, as he used to do when he did not know how to act; finally

uneasiness and dislike were plainly shown on his face.

"Lord," cried Tygellinus, seeing it, '1 permit me to go, for when they wish to expose thy person to peril, and besides call thee a timorous Caesar, timorous poet, incendiary and a comedian, my ears can not stand sucj> words."

"I have lost," thought Petronius.

But turning to Tygellinus, he measured him with a look in which there was the contempt of a great lord and an exquisiteman for a wretch and said:

"Tygellinus, it was thou whom I called a comedian, for

thou art one even now."

"Is it because I do not want to listen to your offenses?"

"It is because you are feigning a boundless love for Caesar, while thou hast threatened him with pretorians, which weal!

understood and he also."

Tygellinus, who did not expect that Petronius would dare throw such dice on the table, became pale, lost his head and became dumb. But this was the last victory of the "arbiter elegantiarum" over his rival, for in the same instant Poppaea. said:

" Lord, how canst thou permit that even such a thought should pass through anybody's head, and moreover that somebody dared to proclaim it out loudly in thy presence,"

"Punish the impertinent one," cried Vitelius.

Nero again raised his lips to his nostrils and turning upon Petronius, said:

<sup>11</sup> Is this the way thou payest me for the friendship I had for thee?"

"If I am mistaken, prove it to me," answered Petronius, "but know that I say what love for thee dictates,"

\*• Punish the impertineut one," repeated Vitelius.

"Do it," said a number of voices.

In the atrium there arose a noise or murmur, for the people began to move away from Petronius. Even Tullius Senecio, his constant companion at the court, moved away, and the young Nerva, who until now was showing to him the warmest friendship. Petronius remained -alone on the left side of the atrium, and with a smile on his lips, arranging with his hands the folds of his toga, awaited what Caesar would say or do.

But Caesar said:

"• You'desire me to punish him, but he is my companion and my friend, therefore, though he wounded my heart, let him know that this heart has forgiveness through friendship only."

"I have lost, and I perish," thought Petronius. Mean-

while Caesar arose—the consultation was ended.

## CHAPTER VII.

Petronius went home, while Nero and Tygellinus went to Poppasa's atrium, where there were people waiting for them,

with whom the prefect had previously spoken.

There were two rabbis from Trans-Tiber arrayed in long, solemn garments with mitres on their heads; a young scrivener, their assistant, and Chilo. At the sight of Caesar the priests became pale from emotion,- and raising their hands to the height of the arms, they bent their heads.

"We salute thee, 0 monarch of monarchs and king of kings," said the eldest, "we salute thee, 0 earth-ruler, protector of the chosen people, and Caesar—lion among men, whose reign is like the sunshine, like cedar of Lebanon, like a spring, like a palm, and like the balsa'm of Jericho."

"You do not call me god?" asked Caesar.

The priests became still paler; the eldest spoke again.

"Thy words, 0 lord, are as sweet as grapes and like a.

ripe fig, for Jehova filled thy heart with goodness. But the predecessor of thy father, Caesar Caius, was a cruel man, still our messengers did not<sup>1</sup> call him god, preferring death even to an insult to the law."

"And Caligula was ordered to throw him to the lions?"

"No, lord, Caesar Caius feared Jehova's wrath,." And they raised their heads, for the name of the powerful Jehova added couraged to them. Confident in His strength they now looked in Nero's eyes more boldly.

"You accuse the . Christians of burning Rome?" asked

Caesar.

"We, 0 lord, accuse them only of being enemies to the law, enemies of the human race, enemies of Rom and of thee, and for a long time they menaced the city uid the world with fire. The rest will be told to you by a man whose lips will not disgrace themselves with a lie, for the blood of the choses people had flowed in his mother's veins."

Nero turned towards Chilo.

"Who art thou?"

<sup>1</sup> 'Thy worshipper, 0 Oziris, and besides a poor stoic."

"I hate stoics," said Nero, "I hate Traseas, I hate Musonius and Cornus. Repulsive is their language to me; their contempt of art, their voluntary misery and 'immoralities."

<sup>1</sup> 'Lord, thy teacher, Seneca, has a thousand cytrus tables. Desire so, and I will have twice as many. I am a stoic from necessity. Dress, 0 Radiant, my stoicism with a garland of roses and place a pitcher of wine before it, and it will sing Anacreon so that it will deafen all epicureans."

Nero, whose taste suited the name "Radiant," smiled and

said:

"Thou pleasest me!"

"This man is worth as much gold as he weighs," cried Tygellinus.

Chilo answered:

"Complete, master, my weight with thy liberality, for otherwise the wind will carry away the payment."

"Really, thou canst not outweigh Vitelius," put in Caesar.
"Eheu, silver-bowed Apollo, my wit is not of lead."

"I see that thy law does not forbid thee to call me god?"

" 0 immortal! My faith is in thee. The Christians blasphemed against this faith and therefore I hate them."

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"What dost thou know about the Christians?"

"Wilt thou permit me to weep, 0 godlike?"

"No," said Nero, "that bores me.

" And thrice right thou art, for eyes which saw thee ought to become dry of tears. Lord, defend me from my enemies.

'1 Talk about the Christians, " said Poppsea, with a shade

«of impatience.

"It will be as thou orderest," 0 Isis," answered Chilo. So from youth I devoted myself to philosophy, and I searched for truth. I searched for it with the ancient divine sages, and in the Academy in Athens, and in the Alexandrian Serapeum. Hearing of Christians, I judged that it was some new school in which I will be able to find a few kernels of truth, and I became acquainted with them, to my misfortune! The first Christian to whom fate has neared me was Glaucus, a physician in Naples. From him I learned that they worship a certain Chrestos, who promised to destroy all people and destroy all cities upon the earth, and to leave themselves if they will aid him in the exterminating of the children of Deucalion. This is the reason, 0 lord, for which they hate people, therefore they poison the fountains, therefore they cast curses in their congregations upon Rome and upon all temples in which our gods are worshipped. Chrestos was crucified, but he promised them that when Rome will be destroyed with fire, then he will come again to the world and give them the rule over the earth."

"Now the people will understand why Rome burned," in-

terrupted Tygellinus.

"Many understand it now, lord," answered Chilo, 4'for I walk around the gardens, the Mars Field, and teach. But if you deign to listen to me to the end, you will understand what reasons I have for vengeance. The physician, (xlaucus, at first did not betray himself to me that their confession commands to hate the people. Nay! he said to me that Chrestos is a kind divinity, and that love is the fundament of his teaching. My tender heart could not resist such truths, therefore I learned to love Glaucus and I trusted him. I shared every piece of bread with him, every coin, and dost thou, know, 0 lord, how he repaid me? On the way from Naples to Rome he stabbed me with a knife, and my wife, my beautiful and young Berenica, he sold to the slave traders. If Sophocles knew my history! But what

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am I saying! One better than Sophocles is listening to me."

" Poor man!" said Poppaea.

"Who saw the face of Aphrodite is not poor, 0 lady, and I see it now. But at that time I was looking for consolation in philosophy. When I came to Rome I took pains to find the Christian elders, in order to have justice on Glaucus. I thought that they would compel him to give me back my wife. I became acquainted with their great priest. I know another, Paul by name, who was imprisoned here, but was liberated afterwards. I became acquainted with the son of Zebedeas, Linus and Cletus, and many others. I know where they lived before the fire. I know where they congregate. I can point out one quarry in the Vatican hill and one graveyard behind the Nomentanian Gate, where they execute their abominable ceremonies. I saw Peter the Apostle there. I saw Glaucus murdering children in order that the Apostle should have something to besprinkle the heads of those present, and I saw Lygia, the pupil of Pomponia Graecina, who boasted that while not being able to bring child's-blood, she brought the death of a child, for she had thrown a spell over the little Augusta, thy daughter, O Oziris! and thine, 0 Isis!"

" Dost thou hear, 0 Caesar?" said Poppaea.

"Can that be true?" cried Nero.

"I could forgive my own wrongs," continued Chilo, "but hearing of yours, I wanted to stab her with a knife. Alas, the noble Vicinius, who loves her, prevented rpe."

"Vinicius? but did she not run away from him?"

"She ran away, but he sought her, for he cannot, live without her. For a miserable pay, I helped him look for her, and it was I who pointed to him the house in which she lived among Christians in Trans-Tiber. We went there together, and with us thy wrestler, Croton, whom the noble Vinicius hired for safety. But Ursus, Lygia's slave, strangled Croton. He is a man of terrible strength, 0 lord, who breaks the necks of bulls as easy as others break poppy-heads. Aulus and Pomponia loved him for this."

'By Hercules 1" said Nero, 'a mortal who stranged Croton is worthy of having a statue on the Forum. But thou art mistaken or tellest a story, old man, for Vinicius killed

Croton with a knife."

"That is the way the people belie gods. 0 master! I saw

myself how the ribs of Croton were breaking in the hands of Ursus, who afterwards threw Vinicius. He would have killed him if not for Lygia. Vinicius was sick afterwards for a long time, but they nursed him, hoping that he would turn a Christian from love. In fact he did become a Christian."

"Vinicius?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps Petronius also?" asked Tygellinus hastily.

Chilo continued:

"I admire thy keenness, 0 lord! Oh, it is possible—it is very possible!"

"Now I understand why he defended the Christians."

But Nero began to laugh.

"Petronius a Christian! Petronius an enemy of life and luxury? Do hot be fools and wish me to believe this,

for I am ready to disbelieve anything."

"Butthe noble Vinicius became a Christian, 0 lord! I swear by the brightness which is coming, from thee, that I tell the truth, and that nothing impresses me with such an abomination as lying. Pomponia is a Christian, little Aulus is a Christian, and Lygia and Vinicius. I served him faithfully but he in reward, upon the wish of Grlaucus was ordered to flog me, though I am old, and I was sick and hungry. And I swore by Hades that I would remember those wrongs O lord! avenge my wrongs upon them, and I will deliver unto you Peter the Apostle and Linus and Cletus and Glaucus and Crispus, all elders, and Lygia and Ursus;I will point out hundreds of thousands of them; I will point out the prayer-house, cemeteries,—all your prisons will not hold them! Without me you would not be able to find them! Till now in my troubles I sought consolation only in philosophy, let me find it now in the favors which will fall upon me. Old I am, but I did not enjoy life, so let me rest!"

"Thou wishest to be a stoic before a full plate," said

Nero.

"Who renders a service to thee, fills it by the same."

"Thou art not mistaken, 0 philosopher!"

But Poppma did not lose her enemies from her mind. Her fancy for, Vinicius was, it is true, rather a momentary desire, formed under the influence of jealousy, anger and self-love. But nevertheless the coolness of the young patrician touched her deeply, and filled her heart with a stubborn ill-will. To dare to prefer another one to her seemed a crime calling for vengeance. Concerning Lygia she hated her from the first moment in which the beauty of that northern ljly made her uneasy. Petronius, who spoke of the girl's hips being too narrow; could make Caesar believe what he pleased, but not so with Augusta. Poppaea the connoisseur understood from a single glance that in whole Rome, Lygia alone could compete with her, and even conquer her.

"Lord," she said, "avenge our child!"

"Hurry!" cried Chilo, "hurry! for otherwise Vinicius will hide her. I will point out the house to which they returned after the fire."

"I will give thee ten men and go instantly," said

Tygellinus.

"Master! thou didst not see Croton in Ursus' hands; if thou will give fifty, I will point out the house from afar. But if you do not imprison Vinicius also, I am lost."

Tyllegihus looked at Nero.

"Would it not be proper, 0 godlike, to finish with the uncle and the nephew at once?"

Nero thought for a while, and answered:

"No, not now! The people would not believe that Petronius, Vinicius or Pomponia Graecina incended Rome. They had too beautiful houses. To-day other victims are needed, and their turn will come later."

"Then give me soldiers, that they should guard me," said

Chilo.

"Tygellinus will see to this."

"In the meantime thou wilt live with me," said the perfect.

Joy began to beam from Chilo's face.

"I will betray all of them! Only hasten! Hasten!" he shouted with a hoarse voice.

## CHAPTER VIII.

After he left Giesar, Petronius ordered himself to be carried to his house on the Carinae, which, surrounded by a garden from three sides and having in front the small forum of Cecilii, exceptionally escaped from the fire.

For this reason other Augustians, who had lost their houses and in them many riches and works of art, called Petronius fortunate. Besides, it was talked about for a long time that he was the first-born son of Fortuna, and the increasing friendship which Caesar was showing him seemed to confirm the reasonableness of this opinion.

But that first-born son of Fortuna could think only of the inconstancy of this mother, or rather of her similarity to

Chronos devouring his own children.

"If my house would burn down," he spoke to himself, "and together with it my gems, my Etrurian vessels and Alexandrian glass and Corinthian copper, perhaps Nero might forget the offense. By Pollux! And to think that only from me it depended to be the pretorian prefect at this moment! I would proclaim Tygellinusan incendiary, which he really is, I would dress him in a 'painful tunic,' deliver him to the people, save the Christians and rebuild Borne. Who even knows whether honest people would not fare better? I ought to have done this if only out of regard for Vinicius. In case of too much work I would cede to him the office of prefect—and Nero would not try to object. Even if Vinicius would afterwards baptize all the pretorians and Caesar himself, whatin jury would it do to me? Nero pious, Nero virtuous and merciful, he would present an amusing spectacle."

And his carelessness was so great that he began to smile. But his thoughts turned to another direction. It seemed to him that he is at Ancium and that Paul from Tarsus speaks

to him:

"You call us enemies of life, but answer to me, Petronius: Were Caesar a Christian and he to act according to our teaching, would not your life be safer and more certain?"

And remembering those words he continued to speak to

himself:

"By Castor! Paul will find just as many new Christians as will be murdered here, for, if the world can not stand upon knavery, then he is right. But who knows whether it can not. I myself, who have learned not a little, did not learn how to be a great knave, and therefore I will have to open my veins. But anyhow it would have to end this way, and even if it did not end thus it would end in another.

1 am sorry for Eunice and my Myrrhenian vase, but Eunice

is free and the vase will go with me. Ahenobarbus will not have her in any event! I am sorry also for Vinicius. But then, I was bored less of late than formerly—I am ready. There are beautiful things in the world but the men are for the most part so filthy that life is not worth a regret. Who knew how to live should know how to die. Though I belong to the Augustians I was more free than they."

Here he shrugged his shoulders:

1 They, perhaps, think that in the present moment my knees are trembling and that fear raises the hair on my head, but I, returning home, will take a bath in violet water, after which my golden-haired one will anoint me, and after refreshments we will have them sing to us that hymn to Apollo, composed by Antemios. I once said myself: It is not worth while to think of death, for death thinks of us without ouri aid. But it would be a thing of wonder if there would Teally exist certain Elysian fields and spirits on them. Eunice would come to me with time and we would wander together on the meadows grown over with asfodel. I would find better company than here. What varlets, what jugglers, what filthy populace with no taste nor polish! Ten arbiters elegantiarum would not transform those Trymalchions into decent men. By Persephone! I have enough of them!"

And with astonishment he noticed that something separates him already from those people. He knew them well, and knew before what to think of them, but still they seemed now to him more distant and more deserving of contempt

than ever. Really, he had enough of them.

But afterwards he began to consider his position. Thanks "to his keeness, he understood that peril does not threaten him immediately. Nero made use of the proper moment to utter a few beautiful, sublime words of friendship, of forgiveness, and in some measure bound himself with them. He will now have to look for pretexts, and before he finds them, much time may pass. 'First of all he will order a spectacle of Christians"—spoke Petronius to himself—"afterwards he will think of me, and if so, it is not worth while to disturb one self about this—neither change the course of life. A nearer danger threatens Vinicius!"

And from now on he was thinking of Vinicius, whom he

decided to save.

The slaves carried him speedly in the litter amidst ruins, ash-heaps and chimneys, with which the Carinae was filled, but he ordered them to go quickly in order to reach Vinicius as soon as possible. Vinicius, whose "insula" burned down, was living with him and fortunately was at home.

" Didst thou see Lygia to-day?" asked Petronius upon

entering.

"I am returning from her."

"Then listen what I will tell thee and lose no time on questions. They decided to-day at Caesar's to put the guilt of incending Rome upon Christians. Persecution and tortures threaten them. Pursuit may begin any moment. Take Lygia and flee instantly, even beyond the Alps or to 'Africa. And hasten, for it is nearer from Palatine to Trans-Tiber than from here!"

Vinicius was really too much of a soldier to lose time on unnecessary questions. He was listening with wrinkled brow, with a face collected and menacing, but without fear. Evidently the first feeling which awoke in his nature in face of the danger was a desire to fight and defend himself.

"I am going," he said.

"A word yet: take a capsa with gold, take arms and a few of thy Christian men. Tn case of necessity—rescue

Vinicius was already in the door of the atrium.

"Send me news by a slave," called Petronius.

And being alone, Petronius began to walk along the column<sup>^</sup> ornamenting the atrium, meditating what will happen. He knew that Lygia and Linus returned after the fire to the former's house, which like the largest part of Trans-Tiber was saved, and that was an unfavorable circumstance, for it would not be easy otherwise to find them among the crowds. He hoped, nevertheless, that nobody knew in the Palatine where they where living, so that in any event Vinicius will arrive before the pretorians. He also thought that Tygellinus, in order to catch at a single blow as many Christians as possible, has to spread the net over entire Rome, that is, to divide the pretorians in small divisions. If they send not more than ten men for' her, he thought, then the Lygian giant alone will break their bones, and what will happen if Vincinius comes to his assistance? And thinking of this he gathered hope. True, armed

resistance to the pretorians was almost the same as to begitt war with Caesar. Petronius knew also that if Vinicius diet escape the vengeance of Nero, that vengeance might fall upon him. But he did not care much for that. On the contrary the thought of thwarting the designs of Nero and Tygellinus rejoiced him. He decided not to spare money or men, and moreover, as Paul of Tarsus at Ancium converted the largest part of his slaves, he could be certain that he can count upon their readiness and devotion for defending a Christian woman.

The entrance of Eunice interrupted his meditations. At sight of her all his troubles and cares fled. He forgot about Caesar, about the disfavor in which he fell, about the base Augustians, about the pursuit menacing the Christians, about Vinicius and Lygia, but he looked at her with the eyes of an esthetic man, enamoured in the marvelous forms, and of a lover for whom love breathes from these forms. Dressed in a transparent violet garment, called Coavestis, through which her pink flesh was seen, she was as beautiful as a divinity. Besides, feeling herself admired and loving him with all her soul, always thirsty for his fondlings, she began to blush from joy as if she were not a concubine but an innocent girl.

"What wilt thou tell me, 0 Charis?" said Petronius,

extending his hand to her.

And she, inclining her golden head to him, answered:

'Lord, Antemios with the singers came and ask's

whether thou wilt deign to hear him to-day?"

"Let him wait. He will sing to us the hymn to Apollo at the dinner. Around us there are ruins and ashes, but we will hear the hymn to Apollo! By the Pafian groves! when I see thee in this Coa vestis, it seems to me that Aphrodite has veiled herself with a border of the sky and is standing, before me."

"O master!" said Eunice.

"Come here, Eunice, embrace me with thy arms—and give me thy lips. Dost thou love me?"

"I would not love Zeus more."

Saying this she pressed her lips to his, and trembled from happiness in his arms.

But after a while Petronius said:

"But if we had to separate?"

Eunice looked in his eyes with fear:

"How is that, master?"

"Do not fear! For, thou seest, who knowns whether I will not have to prepare for a long journey."

"Take the with thee."

But Petronius changed the subject abruptly and asked:

"Tell me, are there asfodels upon the grass plots in the garden?"

"The cypresses and the grass plots in the garden are yellow from the fire, the leaves dropped from the myrtles and the entire garden looks dead."

'All Rome looks dead and soon it will be a real cemetery. Dost thou know that an edict against the Christians will be issued and a persecution will begin, during which thousands of people will perish?"

"Why will they punish them, master? They are good and

quiet people."

"That's the very reason."

"Then let us go to the sea. Thj' divine eyes do not like

to look upon blood."

"Yea, but meantime I must bathe. Come to the elseothesium to anoint my arms. By the girdle of Kypns! Never yet did thou seem so beautiful to me. I will order a bath-tub for thee shaped like a shell, and thou wilt be in it like a precious pearl.... Come, Golden-haired one."

And they went away, and in an hour afterwards returned with rose-wreaths, and their dim eyes rested upon a table covered with vessels of gold. Boys, dressed like Cupids, were serving them, while they, sipping wine from cups hid in ivy twigs, listened to the hymn to Apollo, sung with the sound of harps under the direction of Anthemios. What did they care that around the villa house chimneys wero projecting from the ruins, and that breaths of wind were spreading the ashes of burnt Rome? They felt happy, and thought only of love, which seemed to change their life to a divine-dream.

But before the hymn was finished, a slave, the overseer of

the atrium, entered the hall.

"Lord," said he in a voice in which uneasiness was discernable,— "a centurion with a detachment of pretorians is standing before the gate and, by the Order of Caesar, desires to see you."

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The song and the sound of harps had ceased. Uneasiness was imparted to all present, for Ceesar usually did not employ pretorians in his intercourse with friends, and their arrival in those times forbode nothing good. Petronius did not show the least emotion and said, like a man whom continuous summons are annoying:

"They might let me eat my dinner in peace."

Then turning to the overseer of the atrium he said:

"Let him in.

The slave disappeared behind the curtains; soon heavy steps were heard and the centurion Aper, an acquaintance of Petronius, dressed in armor and with an iron helmet upon his head entered the hall.

"Noble sir," he said "a letter from Caesar."

Pétronius lazily stretched out his white hand, took the tablets and throwing a glance on them he handed them to Eunice quite calmly:

'He will read to-night a new song from Troica and he

summons me to come."

"I have only the order of delivering the letter," said the centurion.

"There will be no answer. But perhaps, centurion, thou wouldst rest with us for a while and empty a cup of wine?"

"Thanks, noble sir. I will willingly drink the cup of

wine for thy health, but I cannot rest for I am on duty."

"Why did they give the letter to you instead of sending it with a slave?"

'I don't know, sir. Maybe because they have sent me in this direction on another duty."

"I know," said Petronius,—"against the Christians."

"So it is, lord."

"Is the pursuit begun long since?"

"Some detachments were sent to Trans-Tiber in the fore-

Saying this the centurion drank a little wine in honor of Mars, then he emptied it and said:

"May the gods grant to thee what thou wishest."

"Take also this cup," said Petronius.

Then he nodded to Anthemios to finish the hymn to Apollo.

"The Copperbeard begins to play with me and with Vinicius," he spoke to himself, as the harps sounded again. "I

guess the design. He wants to scare me by sending me an invitation through a centurion. In the evening they will ask of the centurion how did I receive him. No, no! Thou wilt not rejoice too much, malicious and cruel puppet. I know that thou wilt not forget the offense, I know that the peril will not miss me, but if thou thinkest that I will look entreatingly in thy eyes, that thou wilt see fear and humility on my face, thou art mistaken."

"Caasar writes, master: "Come if thou hast such a desire,"

said Eunice. "Wilt thou go?"

'I am in excellent humor and I can listen even to his verses," answered Petronius—"therefor 1 shall go, the more so as Vinicius cannot."

Indeed, after the dinner and customary walk he gave himself into the hands of female slaves, who dressed his hair and arranged his toilet, and in an hour afterwards, beautiful as a god, he commanded his slaves to carry him to the Palitine. The hour was calm and warm; the moon was shining so brightly that the lampadarii walking in front of the litter put out the torches. On the streets and among the ruins lurked crowds of people drunk with wine, dressed in ivy and honeysuckle, carrying in their hands twigs of myrtle and laurel, which were furnished by Caesar's gardens.

The abundance of grain and the hope of great spectacles filled the hearts of the people with joy. Here and there songs in honor of the "divine night" and love were sung, here and there they danced by the moonlight; several times the slaves had to shout for more room for the litter of the "noble Petronius" and then the throng separated, shouting in honor of their favorite.

But he thought of Vinicius and wondered that there was no news from him. He was an epicurean and an egotist but intercoursing now with Paul of Tarsus, now with Vinicius, and hearing of Christians every day, he was changed a little though he did not know it himself. A certain wind breathed on him from them which threw unknown seeds into his soul. Other people besides his own person began to interest him. Moreover, to Vinicius he was always, attached, for in his childhood he loved Vinicius' sister and mother very much, and at present, having taken a part in his affairs, he was looking upon them with such an interest as he would look upon some tragedy.

He was not losing hope that Vinicius arrived before the pretorians and fled with Lygia, or in the worst case that he rescued her. But he would rather have the certainty, for he foresaw that he will have to answer different questions for

which it would be better to be prepared.

Stopping in front of Tiberius' house he alighted from the litter and after a while he entered the atrium, already filled with pretorians. His friends of yesterday, though astounded that he was invited, still were ignoring him. But he moved among them, beautiful, free, careless and as self-confident as if he could distribute favors himself. Some of them, seeing him, were made uneasy in their souls, lest they had shown him indifference too early.

However, Cmsar feigned not to see him, and he did not answer to his bow, affecting to be occupied in conversation.

Tygellinus, on the contrary, approached and said:

"Good evening arbiter elegantiarum. Dost thou maintain that it was not the Christians who have burned Rome?"

But Petronius shrugged his shoulders and stroking him on his shoulder-bone, like a freedman, he answered:

"Thou knowest just as well as I do what to think of it."

"I do not dare to compare myself with thy sagacity."

"And partly thou art right, for in this case, when Caesar will read to us the new song from Troica, thou wouldst have, instead of crying like a peacock, to say some absurd opinion."

Tygellinus bit his lips. He was not overjoyed that Caesar deceided to read his new song, for this was opening a field on which he could not compete with Petronius. Indeed, during the reading Nero involuntarily, from former habit, was turning his eyes upon Petronius, noticing carefully what he could read in his face. The latter was listening, raising his eyebrows, nodding his assent at times, at times intensified his attention, as if he wished to verify that he heard correctly. • And afterwards he either praised or criticised, demanding corrections or polishing off certain lines. Nero himself felt that others, while praising him highly, care only for their own persons, and this one only occupies himself with poetry for the poetry itself, the only one who understands it, and if he praises something, one could be certain that the verses are worthy of praise. Slowly, therefore, he began to, dispute with him, and at last when Petronius doubted the correctness of a certain sentence he said to him:

• 'Thou wilt see in the last song why I used it."

"Ah," thought Petronius, " so I shall live to hear the last song."

More than one, hearing this, spoke to himself at heart:

"Woe to me! Petronius having time before him can return favors and overthrow even Tygellinus."

And they again began to approach him. But the end of the evening was less lucky, for Caesar, in the moment when Petronius was taking leave of him, asked suddenly with halfciosed eyes and face at once malignant and glad:

"And why did not Vinicius come?"

Were Petronius sure that Vinicius with Lygia were already beyond the gates of the city he would answer: "He had married by thy permission and departed." But, seeing Nero's strange smile, he answered:

"Thy summons, O godlike, did not find him at home."

•¹ Tell him that I will be glad to see him, "answered Nero—"and tell him for me that he should not neglect the spectacles in which the Christians will figure."

Petronius was alarmed by these words, for it seemed to him that they pertain to Lygia personally. Taking a seat in his litter he commanded them to carry him home swifter still than in the morning. But this was not easy. In front of Tiberius' house stood a throng dense and noisy, drunk as before but not singing and not dancing but as if excited. From afar came certain shouts which Petronius could not understand at once, but which were increasing, and finally changed to a single savage cry:

"The Christians for the lions!"

The splendid litters of the courtiers moved through the howling mob. From- the depth of the burnt streets new crowds were rushing in continually, and hearing the shout began to repeat it. News was passed from mouth to mouth that the pursuit was in force since noon time, that many incendiaries were caught, and soon along the newly opened and the old streets, along the alleys lying among the ruins, around the Palatine, on all the heights and gardens in Borne more and more furious shouts were heard:

"The Christians for the lions!!"

'1 Herd!" repeated Petronius, with contempt, 'people worthy of Caesar!"

And he began to think that such a world, resting upon

violence, of which the barbarians knew no bounds, upon crimes and furious dissolution, cannot last in any event. Rome was the lord of the world, but was also its ulcer. The odor of a cadaver was breathing from it. The shadow of death was falling upon the rotten life. More than once this was spoken of even among the Augustians, but to Petronius' eyes never did the truth appear more distinctly that that crowned chariot, upon which, as a triumphator, Rome stood, dragging behind itself a fettered 'herd of nations, was going to an abyss.' The life of the world-ruling city seemed to him some foolish ceremony and some orgy, which, however, must end.

He understood now that only the Christians have some new fundaments of life, but he thought that soon no trace

of Christians would remain. And what then?

This foolish ceremony will continue under the leadership of -Nero, and when Nero will pass away, another will be found of the same lyind, or worse, for in view of such people and such patricians, there is no reason that a better one should be found. There will be a new orgy, and in addition a more filthy and more wicked one.

But the orgy cannot last eternally, and one has to go to

sleep, even from simple exhaustion.

Thinking of this, Petronius himself felt immensely tired; Is it worth while to live in uncertainty of to-morrow only to look upon this sort of a world? The genus of death is not less beautiful than the genus of sleep, and has wings on his shoulders.

The litter halted in front of Petronius' door, which the watchful doorkeeper opened at the same moment.

<sup>11</sup> Did the noble Vinicius return? " asked Petronius.

"A minute ago, sir," answered the slave.

"So he did not rescue her!" thought Petronius.

And, throwing down his toga, he ran into the atrium. Vinicius was sitting upon a tripod, with his head inclined almost to his knees, but at the sound of steps he raised his face, in which the eyes were feverishly gleaming.

"Didst thou arrive too late?" asked Petronius.

"Yes. She was imprisoned in the forenoon."

There was a minute of silence.

"Didst thou see her?"

"Yes."

"Where is she?"

" In the Mamertinian prison."

Petronius shuddered and began to look upon Vinicius with an inquisitive glance.

Vinicius understood it.

"No!" he said. "They did not cast her into the Tullianum, nor even to the central prison. I paid the guard to give her his room. Ursus lied down on the threshhold and is watching over her.

'1 Why did not Ursus defend her?"

<sup>1</sup> 'They sent fifty pretorians. Besides, Linus forbade him."

"And Linus?"

"Linus is dying. Therefore they did not take him."

"What dost thou intend?"

"To save her or to die with her. I also believe in Christ."

Vinicius was apparently speaking calmly, but there was something so heartbreaking that Petronius quivered with sincere pity.

1 'I understand thee," he said, 'but how dost thou wish to

save her?"

"I bought the guards, first to save her from insults, and second that they should not hinder her flight."

"When shall this take place?"

"They answered that they cannot deliver her to me immediately, because they feared the responsibility. When the prisons will be filled with a multitude of people, and the account of the prisoners will be lost, then they will deliver her to me. But this is the last extremity! First thou save her and me! Thou art a friend of Ctesar. He himself gave her back to me. Go to him and save me!"

Petronius instead of answering called a slave, and ordering him to bring him two dark cloaks and two swords, lie

turned-to Vinicius.

"On the way I will answer thee," he said. "In the meantime take the cloak, take, the weapon and let us go to the prison. There give a hundred thousand sestertia to the guards, give twice and five times as much, provided they will let her out immediately. Otherwise it will be too late."

"Let us go," said Vinicius.

And soon they found themselves on the street.

"And now listen to me," said Petronius. "I did not

wish to lose time. From to-day on I am in disfavor. My own life hangs upon a hair and therefore I cannot hold anything from Ciesar. Worse even! I have the certainty tba't he will act against my entreaty. If not for that, would I advise thee to flee with Lygia or to rescue her? Besides, if thou wert able to escape, the anger of Caesar would be turned oh me. But to-day he would do something at thy request rather than at mine. But do not count on this. Get her from the prison and flee! Nothing else remains to thee. If that will fail thee then it will be time for other means. In the meantime know that Lygia was imprisoned not alone for her belief in Christ. The anger of PoppsEa persecutes her and thee. Dost thou remember that thou hast offended Augusta, that thou hast rejected her? And she knows that thou hast rejected her for Lygia's sake, whom she hated from the first glance. She tried once before to ruin her, ascribing to her witcheries the death of her child. What has happened is the hand of Poppaea! How wilt' thou explain why was Lygia the first one imprisoned? Who could point out Linus' house? And I tell thee that she was followed for a long time! I know that I tear thy soul and that I take the rest of thy hope, but I tell thee this purposely, because if thou wilt not liberate her before they will find out that thou wilt try it, then you both perish."

"So it is! I understand!" answered Vinicius in a low

voice.

The streets by reason of the late hour were deserted, but their further conversation was interrupted by a. drunken gladiator coming from the opposite direction. He tumbled upon Petronius, so that he rested his hand upon Petronius' shoulder, breathing in his face the odor of wine and shouting in a hoarse voice:

"The Christians for the lions 1"

"Mirmillion," said Petronius calmly, "listen to good advice and go thy own way."

.But the drunken man grasped him by the arm with his other hand and said:

\* 'Shout with me; or I will twist thy neck. The Qhristians for the lions!"

But the nerves of Petronius had enough of their shouts. From the time of their exit from the Palatine they were choking him "like a nightmare and were tearing his ears; therefore, seeing the hand of the giant raised above himself, the measure of his patience was exhausted.

"Friend," he said, "thou smellest of wine, and art in my

way."

So saying, he drove into the man's breast, up to the hilt, the short sword with which he had armed himself, after which, taking Vinicius by the arm, he continued on as if

nothing had happened.

"Ctesar told me to-day: 'Tell Vinicius for me, that he should be present at the spectacles in which the Christians will figure.' Dost thou understand what this means? They want to have a show of thy pain. This is a settled affair. Perhaps that is the reason why thou and I are not imprisoned. If thou wilt not be able to get her out at once, then ....I don't know!.... Perhaps Acte will speak for thee, but will she gain anything? Thy Sicilian lands might also tempt Tygellinus. Try it.

"I will give him all I have," said Vinicius.
From the Carinae to the Forum was not far, therefore they arrived soon. The night began to grow pale and the walls of the castle to protrude plainly from the shadow.

Suddenly, as they turned towards the Mamertinian prison.

Petronius halted and said:

"Pretorians! Too late!"

In fact, the prison was surrounded by a double cordon of soldiers. The dawn silvered their iron helmets and the points of their lances.

The face of Vinicius became as pale as death.

"Let us go," he said.

Very soon they stopped before the file. Petronius, who being gifted with an unusual memory, knew not only the officers, but almost all the soldiers of the pretoria, at once perceived his acquaintance, the. leader of the cohort, and nodded at him.

"What is that, Niger?" he said, "were you ordered to

guard the prison?"

"So it is, noble Petronius. The prefect fears that they will try to rescue the incendiaries."

"Have you an order not to admit anybody?" asked Vini-

cius.

"No, master. Friends will visit the prisoners, and in this way we will catch more Christians."

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"Then let me in," said Vinicius; and pressing the hand of Petronius he said to him:

" See Acte, and I will come to learn what answer she gave to thee.

"1 Come," answered Petronius.

In this moment under the ground and behind the thick walls singing was heard. The song, at first low and stifled, became louder and louder. The voices of men, women and children united in one harmonious choir. The entire prison began to resound in the quietude of the dawn like a harp. But those were not voices of sorrow or despair. On the contrary, joy and triumph sounded in them.

The soldiers looked at one another with astonishment.

On the sky appeared the first golden gleams of the dawn.

## CHAPTER IX.

The shout, "The Christians for the lions!" was heard continually in all parts of the city. In the first moment not anyone doubted that they were the real perpetrators of thedisaster, but nobody wanted to doubt, for their punishment was to be a magnificient amusement for the people. But the opinion spread that the disaster would not assume such terrible dimensions but for the anger of the gods, therefore in temples piacula or purifying offerings were ordered. By consultation of Sibyllian books the senate arranged cerenn. nies and public prayers to Vulcan, to Ceres and to. Proserpina. The matrons were offering sacrifices to Juno; their whole procession went to the seashore to take water and sprinkle with it the statue of the goddess. Married women prepared feasts to gods and night-vigils. Rome was purifying itself from sins, bringing offerings and appeasing the immortals. And meanwhile among the ruins new, broad streets were opened. Here and there foundations for magnificient houses, palaces and temples were already laid. But first of all with unheard of haste they were building immense wooden amphitheatres, in which the Christians were to breathe their last, Immediately after the consultation Tiberius' house orders to the proconsuls were dispatched to furnish wild beasts. T.ygellinus emptied the vivaria of all

the Italian cities, not excluding the smaller ones. In Africa, by his order, immense hunts were arranged, in which the entire local population had to participate. Elephants and tigers from Asia, crocodiles and hippopotamuses from the Nile, lions from Atlas, wolves and bears from the Pyrenees, savage dogs from Hibernia, Molos dogs from the Epirus, buffalos and savage bisons from Germania. By reason of the number of the prisoners the games were to surpass anything ever before seen. Caesar wished to drown the remembrances of the conflagaration in blood and to intoxicate Rome, therefore the bloodshed never promised to be more magnificient.

The enlivened people helped the vigils and the pretorians in the pursuit of the Christians. It was not a difficult thing, for whole crowds camping with other people in the gardens were loudly confessing their faith. When surrounded they were kneeling down and singing hymns, and allowed themselves to be seized without resisting. But their patience only increased the anger of the people, who, not understanding its origin, considered it as stubborness and persistence in crime. A fury seized the persecutors. It happened that the mob wrested Christians from the hands of pretorians and tore them to pieces with their hands; women were dragged to prisons by their hair; children's heads were dashed against stones. Thousands of people were running day and night howling along the streets. Victims were sought among ruins, in chimneys and cellars. In front of the prisons, at the fires, around the wine-barrels, Bacchian feasts and dances were held. In the evenings they were listening with delight to roars similar to thunder-claps, which sounded throughout the whole city. The prisons were overflowed, but the mob drove in new victims every day. Pity was dead. It seemed that the people had forgotten to speak, and in their mad fury they remembered only one shout: "The Christians for the lions!" The days and nights were sultrier than ever before known in Rome; the air itself appeared saturated with fury, blood and crime.

And to that overgrown measure of cruelties—an overgrown measure of the desire of martyrdom was answering. The confessors of Christ were voluntarily going to death and sought death even, until they were stopped by the stern commands of the elders. By the latter's orders they began to gather only outside the city, in the undergrounds

af the Appian Way and in suburban vineyards belonging to patrician Christians, of -whom none were imprisoned as yet. It was perfectly known in the Palatine that to the confessors of Christ belonged: Flavius, Domitilla, Pomponia Grmcina, Cornelius Pudens and Vinicius; but Caesar himself, however, feared 'it impossible to make the mob believe that such people had incended Rome, and as first of all the conviction of the people had to be considered—the punishment and the vengeance were postponed till later days. Others thought that the influence of Acte had saved those patricians. This opinion was erroneous. Petronius, after parting with Vinicius went, it is true, to Acte for help to Lygia, but she could offer him only tears for she was living in poverty and sorrow and endured only so long as she concealed. herself from Caesar and Poppaea.

However, she visited Lygia in the prison, brought her Slothing and victuals, and above all saved her from insults on the part of the prison-guards, who were already bribed.

Still Petronius, not being able to forget that if not for him and for his plans of taking Lygia from the house of Aulus she probably would not at present be in prison, and besides, wishing to win the game with Tygellinus, spared neither time nor endeavors. In the course of a few days he saw Seneca, Domitius Afra, Crispinilla, through whom he wished to reach Poppaea; also Terpnos, Diodorus, and the beautiful Pythagoras, and finally Aliturus and Paris, to whom usually Caesar did not refuse anything. With the aid of Chrysotemis, who was at present a mistress of Vatinius, he tried to gain even his assistance, not sparing him nor the others with promises or money.

But all those exertions remained fruitless. Seneca, uncertain of his own to-morrow, began to persuade him that even if the Christians did not really burn Rome, they ought to be exterminated for its good; in a word, he justified the future slaughter by reason of the State. Terpnos and Diodorus accepted the money, but did not do anything in return. Vatinius informed Ciesar that they tried to bribe him. Aliturus only, who at first was hostile to the Christians, now was pitying them, dared to mention to Caesar the imprisoned girl, and to entreat for her, but he obtained nothing save the answer:

"Dost thou then think that I have a weaker soul

than Brutus, who did not spare his own sons for the good of Rome?"

And when he repeated this answer to Petronius, the latter said:

"Now that Nero found a comparison with Brutus, there is no help left."

He was sorry however for Vinicius, and he feared that he would make an attempt upon his own life. "Now," he thought to himself, "the endeavors which he is making for her salvation are supporting him. Petronius understood that it is possible to die thus, rather than to love and to suffer so. Meanwhile Vinicius was doing all that he could think of in order to save Ligia. He was visiting the Augustians, and he, once so haughty, now begged their assistance. Through Vitellius he offered Tygellinus his Sicilian lands and everything he might ask. Tygellinus however, not wishing to give offence to Augusta, declined. To go to Caesar himself, to embrace his knees and to implore would lead to nothing. Vinicius wanted to do this but Petronius, hearing of his intention, asked him:

" And he will refuse thee, and if he answers with a joke

on shameless menace, what wilt thou do?"

To this the features of Vinicius contracted with pain and rage, and from his closed jaws a gnashing was heard. "Yes!" said Petronius, "that is why I dissuade thee from

it. "Thou wilt close all the roads to salvation!"

But Vinicius restrained himself, and passing his hand over his forehead, covered with cold perspiration, answered:

"No! no! I am a Christian!" .. ..

"And thou wilt forget it as thou hast forgotten it a moment ago. Thou hast the right to ruin thyself, but not her. Remember what Sejanus' daughter suffered before death."

And speaking thus he was not perfectly sincere, for he cared more for Vinicius than for Lygia. But he knew that he would check him with nothing from such a dangerous step but by persuading him that it would bring an irrevocable destruction to Lygia. Besides, he was right, for on the Palatine they foresaw the arrival of the young tribune and took corresponding measures of caution.

However, the suffering of Vinicius surpassed all that human strength can endure. Ever since Lygia was imprisoned and the light of future martyrdom had fallen upon

her, he not only had fallen a hundred-fold deeper in love with her, but he began simply to pay her in his soul an almost religious honor, as to a heavenly being. And now at the thought that he lost this being, beloved, and holy, and that besides death, tortures more horrible even than the death itself can befall her, the blood stopped in his veins, his soul was changing to one groan, his thoughts were confused. At times it seemed to him that his skull was filled with a live fire, that would burst it. He ceased to understand why Christ, that merciful one, that God, does not come to help his confessors, why, the besmoked walls of the Palatine do not sink under the ground, and together with them, Nero, the Augustians, the pretorian camp and that whole city of crime. He thought that it cannot and should not be otherwise, and that all on which his eyes look, which breaks his heart, is a dream. But the roar of the beasts told hi m that it was a reality, and the noise of axes from under which arenas were rising told him that it was true. Then his faith in Christ was shaken and his dismay was a new :torture, perhaps the most horrible of all.

,And meanwhile Petronius was telling him:

"Remember what Sejanus' daughter endured before death."

## CHAPTER X.

And everything failed. Vinicius lowered himself to the degree that he sought support of freedmen and female slaves, those of Cæsar as well as those of. Poppæa. He overpaid their vain promises and obtained their consideration with rich gifts. He found the first husband of Augusta, Rufius Crispinus, and obtained a letter from him; he donated a villa in Ancium to her son from the first marriage, Rufius, but he only angered Cæsar with this, who hated his stepson. By a special courier he wrote to the second husband of Poppæa, Othon, in Hispania, and offered his whole property and himself, till finally he perceived that he only was a plaything of men, and that if he had feigned that he little cared for the imprisonment of Lygia, he would liberate hey sooner.

Petronius perceived the same. Meanwhile day after <day passed. The amphitheatres were finished. Tesserae, that is, signs of entrance to the 'ludus matutinus" were already distributed. But this time the "morning" game, by reason of an unheard of multitude of victims, was to stretch to days, weeks and months. It was not known where to place the Christians. The prisons were crowded, and fever raged in them. Puticuli, that is, common pits in which slaves were buried, began to overfill. A fear arose lest the diseases might spread over the whole city, so it was decided to hurry.

And all this news sounded in Vinicius' ears, extinguishing in him the last rays of hope. While there was time he could delude himself that he could obtain something, but now the time had come. The games were to begin. Lygia could find herself any day in the circus cuniculum, from which the exit was solely on the arena. Vinicius, not knowing where fate and the cruelty of violence might throw her, began to visit all the circuses, bribe the guards and the bestiarii, proposing plans to them which they could not fulfill.

But he did not intend to outlive her, and decided to perish with her. But he judged that the pain would kill him before the terrible time arrived. His friends and Petronius also thought that any day the kingdom of shadows might open before him. His face became yellow, and similar to those waxen masks kept in lararia. In his features the astonishment had stiffened, as if he did not understand what ' had happened and what might happen. When anyone spoke to him he raised his eyes by a mechanical motion and looked at the speaker with a terrified and inquisitive glance. The nights he passed with Ursus in the prison near the door of Lygia, and if she ordered him to go away and rest, he returned to Petronius and walked till morning in the atrium. The slaves often found him kneeling with raised hands or lying on the ground face down. He was praying to Christ, for this was his last hope. Everything had failed. Only a wonder could • save Lygia, therefore Vinicius was striking his forehead against the stone slabs and prayed for the miracle.

With the knowledge he had he understood that Peter's prayer signifies more than his. Peter promised Lygia to him.

Peter baptized him. Peter himself was doing miracles, let

him then give help and assistance to Vinicius.

And on a certain night he went to search for him. The Christians, of whom not many remained, were hiding him carefully, even from other Christians, in order that some of the weaker should not voluntarily betray him. Vinicius, in the midst of general confusion and disaster, being occupied with endeavors to get Lygia out of prison, lost the Apostle from his eyes-, so that since his baptism he had rarely seen him, since the beginning of the persecution. But going to the digger in whose cottage he was baptized, he learned from him that in the vineyard beyond the Porta Salaria, belonging to Cornelius Pudens, a meeting of the Christians, will take place. The digger undertook to lead Vinicius to it, assuring him that he would find Peter there. In fact, at nightfall they went and reaching the other side of the walls, making their way through ditches grown over with reeds, they reached the vineyard situated in a wild and secluded place. The meeting was being held in a shed in which wine was usually made. On entering, a murmur of prayers reached his ears and once inside he saw by the dim light of the lanterns some fifty kneeling in prayer. They were saying a sort of a litany, while a chorus of voices, male as well as female, repeated every minute: "Christ, have mercy." Deep, heart-breaking, sorrow and grief was in their voices

Peter was present. He was kneeling in front, before a wooden cross nailed to the wall of the shed, and was praying. Vinicius recognized from afar his white hair and uplifted hands. The first thought of the young patrician was to pass the congregation, to drop down to the Apostle's feet and to cry: "Help 1" but for the solemnity of the prayer or for the weakness his knees bent, and kneeling down near the entrance, he began to repeat with a groan and with clinched palms: "Christ, have mercy!" Were he conscious he would, understand that not only in his prayer a groan was sounding, and that he was not the only one who brought here his pain, his grief and his fear. There was not a single human soul in this congregation who did not lose friends dear to the heart, and while the most zealous and most courageous of the confessors were already imprisoned, with every moment, fresh news spread of the insults and tortures which were in-

flicted to them in the prisons, while the immensity of the disaster surpassed all suppositions, while there remained this handful of them, there was not a single heart among them which was not terrified in his belief and did not ask in desperation: "Where is Christ? and why does He permit that the evil be more powerful than God?"

But meanwhile they were begging Him with despair for mercy, for in each soul there was glimmering a spark of hope that He will come, will destroy the evil, hurl Nero down into an abyss and govern the world.... They looked to heaven, they were listening, trembling and praying. Vinicius repeating, "Christ, have mercy!" was seized by an ecstasy such as lie experienced in the digger's house. Behold they call oh Him from the depth of the suffering—from the precipice ibehold, Peter calls on Him, therefore any moment the sky may part, the earth will tremble to its foundations. He will come down in immense light, with stars at his feet, merciful but menacing, He will raise his faithful and will order the precipices to swallow the persecutors.

Vinicius covered his face with his hands and dropped to the earth. Suddenly a silence surrounded him as of fear stopped further calls in the mouths of all present. And it seemed to him that something must necessarily happen, that the moment of the miracle will come. He was certain that when he arose and opened his eyes he will see a light which blinds mortal eyes and he will hear a voice from which

hearts are fainting.

But the silence reigned continually. At last the sobbing of a woman broke it.

Vinicius arose and began to look before him with stupified eyes.

In the shed, instead of unearthly lights the faint flames of lanterns were glimmering and the moon-rays penetrating through the opening in the ceiling were filling it with silvery light. The people kneeling at his side were raising their eyes, flooded with tears, toward the cross; here and there other sobs were heard, and the careful whistles of the watchmen reached them from without. Then Peter arose and turning to those assembled, he said:

"Children, raise your hearts toward our Saviour and offer

to Him your tears."

And he grew silent.

Suddenly among those gathered a voice of a woman was heard, full of sorrowful complaint and boundless suffering:

"I, a widow, had but one son, who supported me.

Give him back to me, O Lord !"..,.

A moment of silence again followed. Peter stood before thekneeling assembly, old, careworn, and seeming to them at thismoment like a personification of decrepitude and feebleness.

• Then another voice began to complain:

"The executioners insulted my daughters and Christ permitted it!"

Then a third one:

"I remain alone with my children, and when they will seize me, who will give bread and water to them?"

Then the fourth one:

'1 They took Linus again, whom they left before, and put him on tortures, 0 Lord!"

Then the fifth:

"When we will return to our homes the pretorians will seize us. We don't know where to conceal ourselves."

"Woe to us! Who will protect us?"

And in the silence of the night complaint sounded after complaint. The old fisherman closed his eyes and shook hiswhite head over that human suffering and fear. Silence again followed; only the watchmen were whistling quietly behind the shed.

Vinicius sprang up again in order to make his way through the congregation to the Apostle and to demand aid of him, but he suddenly saw in front of him as if a precipice, the sight of which made his legs powerless. What will there be if the Apostle will confess his inability, if he will confirm that the Roman Caesar is more powerful than Christ of Nazareth? At this thought he was filled with fear, for he felt that in that event not only his remaining hope will fall into this abyss, but himself and his Lygia, his love for Christ, his belief, and all with which he had lived, and only death and night, shoreless like a sea, will remain.

And meanwhile Peter began to speak in a voice so quiet

that he could hardly be heard:

"Children of mine! I saw on Golgotha as they nailed. God to the cross. I heard the hammers and I have seen, when they raised up the cross in order that the crowds, might look upon the death af the Son of Man. \* • \* \* \*

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'And I saw, when they opened his side, and He died. And then, returning from the cross, I was calling in pain, like you call now: 'Woe! Woe! 0 Lord! Thou art God—why didst thou permit this, why didst Thou die, and why didst Thou distress our hearts, who believed that Thy kingdom will come?....

".. .And He, our Lord and our God, arose from the dead on the third day, and was among us until he entered

His kingdom amid a great brightness....

"And we, seeing our weak faith, were strengthened in our hearts and since then we have sowed His seed." \* \* \* \*

Here, turning in the direction from which came the first

complaint, he began to speak in a stronger voice: "Why do you complain?.... God gave Himself up to tortures and death, and you desire that He should protect you from it? People of little faith! Did you understand His teaching—did He promise you only this one life? Behold He comes to you and says: 'Come, follow me;' behold He raises you to Himself, and you cling with your hands to the earth, calling: 'Lord, help!' I am dust before God, but for you I am the Apostle of God and vicar; and I say to you in the name of Christ, not death before you, but life; not tortures, but countless delights; not tears and groans, but singing; not slavery, but reigning! I, an Apostle of God, say to thee, Widow, thy son will not die, but he will be born in glory for eternal life and thou wilt join him! To thee, father, whose innocent daughters the executioners disgraced, I promise that thou wilt find them again whiter than the lilies of Hebron! To you, mothers, who will be torn away from the orphans, to you who will lose fathers, to you who are complaining, to you who will look upon the death of the beloved, to you, the careworn, unfortunate, fearing, and to you who are to die, I say in the name of Christ, that like from a dream you will wake for a happy waking, and like from a night for the light of God. In the name of Christ, let the barrier fall from .your eyes and let your hearts be glowing!"

Saying thus he raised his hand as if ordering, and they felt new blood in their veins and also a shudder in their bones, for not an old man, decrepit and careworn, stood before them, but a potentate, who was taking their souls and

was raising them from the dust and the fear.

When the "Amen!" ceased, he continued:

"Sow in,tears what you will reap in joy. Why do you, fear the power of the evil? Above the earth, above Rome, above the wills of the cities there is the Lord, who has settled in you. The stones will be moistened by the tears, the sand will be saturated with blood, the pits will be full of your bodies, and I tell you: \(^1\) You are the victors! 'The Lord is coming to the conquest of this city of crime, tyranny and pride, and you are his legion! And like He himself redeemed with tortures and blood the sins of the world, so He desires that you should redeem with torture and blood this den of iniquity!.. .. This He declares to you through my lips!"

And he spread his hands, and fixed his eyes upward, and to them the hearts in their breasts almost ceased to beat, for they felt that he saw something that their mortal eyes could

not see.

In fact, his face changed and was covered with brightness, and for a while he was looking in silence, as if dumb from

ecstacy. But soon his voice was again heard:

"Thou art here, O Lord, and pointest to me the way!...
How, O Christ!... Not in Jerusalem, but in this city of Satan Thou wishest to lay Thy capital? Here, from these tears and from this blood dost Thou want to build Thy church? There where Nero rules to-day Thy eternal kingdom should stand? O Lord, Lord! And Thou commandest these timid ones to build the foundation for the new Zion of the world from their bones, and Thou commandest my spirit to assume and rule over it and over the people of the earth? .... And Thou art pouring a spring of strength upon the weak ones that they should become strong, and Thou commandest me to pasture here Thy lambs until the accomplishing of ages.... Oh, be then praised in Thy decrees, Thou who commandest to conquer. Hosanna! "

Those who were timid arose; those who doubted were filled with faith. Some voices suddenly shouted: "Hosanna!" others: "Pro Christo!" after which silence followed. Bright summer lightnings illuminating the inside of the shed and pale faces.

Peter, looking fixedly on the vision, was praying for a long time, but finally turned to the congregation his inspired'

face and said:

"Now, as the Lord conquered despair in you, so you go to conquer in His name!"

And though he knew already that they will conquer, though he knew what will grow out from their tears and blood, still his voice quivered with emotion when he began to make the sign of the cross, and he said:

" And now, my children, I bless you for the tortures you

have suffered!

But they surrounded him, calling:

"We are ready, but thou, O Holy Head, hide thyself, for thou art the vicar who performs the government of Christ!" And, saying thus they clung to his garments, and he was placing his hands upon their heads and was blessing each one separately like a father blesses his children whom he sends on a long journey.

And they began to leave the shed, for they were in a hurry to reach their homes and from them go to the prisons and arenas. Their minds tore themselves from the earth, their souls took flight toward the eternity, and they went, as in a dream or in ecstasy, to oppose with that force which was in

them the cruelty of the "Beast."

Nereus, servant of Pudens, took the Apostle and was guiding him through a path hid in the vineyard to his house. But, in the bright night, Vinicius was following them, and when they finally reached the cottage of Nereus, he suddenly threw himself down to the Apostle's feet.

The latter, recognizing him, asked: "What dost thou wish, my son?"

But Vinicius, after what he had heard in the shed, did not dare to beg him for anything, only embracing his feet with his hands he pressed his lips to them and implored mercy in this manner.

The Apostle said:

' I know. They took the girl whom thou lovest. Pray for her."

"Master," groaned Vinicius, firmer embracing the Apostle's feet. "Master! I am a miserable worm, but thou hast known Christ; thou beg Him, thou speak for her."

And he was trembling from pain and struck his forehead against the earth, for, knowing the strength of the Apostle, he was aware that he alone could give her back to him.

And Peter was moved by this suffering. He remembered

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how once Lygia, rebuked by Crispus, was lying in the same way at his feet, begging for mercy. He remembered that he raised her and consoled her; so he raised Vinicius.

"My dear son," he said, "I will pray for her, but thou remember what I said to those despairing, that God himself passed through the torture of the cross, and remember that

after this life another eternal one begins."

1 · I know!... I know it, "answered Vinicius, catching his breath, "but thou seest, master... I cannot! If blood is necessary, beg Christ to take mine.... I am a soldier. Let Him double, let Him triple to me the torture intended for her, I will stand it! But let Him save her! She is a child, master!... .Thou hast loved her thyself. Thou hast blessed us! She is an innocent child!"

Here he bent down, and putting his face against the knees of Peter, he began to repeat:

"Thou hast known Christ, master! Thou hast known.

He will listen to thee! Speak in her behalf I"

And Peter closed his eyelids and prayer fervently.

Summer lightnings began again to illuminate the sky. Vinicius by their light was looking at the Apostle's lips, waiting from them a sentence of life or death. In the sjlence quails calling in the vineyard were heard, and the dull, distant sound of the tread-mills at the Via Salaria.

"Vinicius," finally asked the Apostle, "dost thou be-

lieve?"

"Master, would I come here otherwise?"

'Then believe to the end, for faith moves the mountains. Therefore even wert thou to see that maiden under the executioner's sword, or in the jaws of a lion, believe that Christ can save her. Believe and pray to Him and I will pray together with thee."

Then, raising his face toward heaven, he loudly said:

' Merciful Christ, look upon that aching heart and console it! Merciful Christ, moderate the wind to the wool of the lamb! Merciful Christ, who hast begged 'the Father to avert the cup of bitterness from Thy lips, avert it from the lips of this servant of thine! Amen!"

And Vinicius, extending his hands toward the stars, said

groaning:

"0 Christ! Thine I am! Take me for her."

The sky began to grow darker in the east.

## CHAPTER XI.

Vinicius, having left the Apostle, went to the prison with a heart strengthened by hope. Somewhere in the depth of his soul despair and fear were crying, but he stifled those voices. It seemed an impossibility to him that the interposition of the vicar of G od and the power of his prayer should remain fruitless. He feared not to have hope, he was afraid to doubt.

"I will believe in His mercifulness," he said to himself,

"were I to see her in lions' jaws."

At this thought his heart trembled within him and cold sweat covered his brow, but he believed. Each beat of his heart now was a prayer. He began to understand that faith moves mountains, for he felt in himself a certain strength which he had not felt before. It seemed to him that with it he will be able to perform feats which only yesterday were not in his power.

At times he had the impression that the evil, had passed already. If despair was heard moaning in his soul, then he remembered the night and that holy, aged face raised toward

heaven in prayer.

"No! Christ will not refuse His first disciple,' and the shepherd of His flock! Christ will not refuse him and I will-not despair."

And he was running to the prison like a heralder of

good news.

But here an unexpected thing awaited him.

Pretorian guards at the Mamertinian prison all knew him and usually were not making the least objection to him, but this time the chain did not open, and the centurion approaching him said:

'Pardon, noble tribune, to-day we have an order not to

admit anyone"

"An order?" repeated Vinicius, growing pale.

The soldier looked compassionately at him and answered:

"Yes, master. An order of Csesar. There are many sick in the prison and perhaps they fear lest the comers might carry the contagion through the city."

"But thou hast said that the order is for to-day only?"

"The guards are changing at noon."

Vinicius was silent.

Suddenly a soldier approached and said in a low voice:

1 'Be at ease, master. The watchmen and Ursus are

guarding over her."

Having said this, he bent down and in a twinkle of an eye drew a shape of a fish on the stone slab with his long Gallic sword.

Vinicius looked at him sharply.

.... "And thou art a pretorian?"....

"Till I shall be there," answered the soldier, pointing at the prison.

"And I worship Christ."

"May His name Be praised! I know, master. I cannot let thee into the prison, but if thou wilt write a letter I shall give it to the watchmen."

"Thanks to thee, brother!" ....

And pressing the soldiers' hand, he went away.

The morning sun . arose above the prison-walls, and together with its brightness confidence began to enter Vinicius' heart. This soldier, a Christian, was to him like a new evidence of the power of Christ. After a while he stopped, and fixing his eyes in the rosy clouds suspended over the Capitol and Stator's temple he said:

'I did not see her to-day, 0 Lord, but I believe in Thy

mercy."

At home Petronius was awaiting him, who as usual, making day out of night, had just returned. But he had already taken his bath and anointed himself for sleep.

"I have news for thee," he said. <sup>1</sup> 'I was to-day at Tullius Senecio, where I met Caesar. I don't know whence the thought came to Augusta to bring the little Rufius with her.

.... Perhaps in order that with his beauty he should soften Ciesar's heart. Unfortunately the child, overpowered by drowsiness, fell asleep during the reading, like Vespasian; seeing this, Ahenobarbus threw a tumbler and wounded the child severely. Poppma fainted and all have heard Caesar say: 'I have enough of this by-breed, ' and that, thou knowest, signifies as much as death!"

"God's punishment is hanging over Augusta," answered -

Vinicius: "but why dost thou tell this to me?"

"I say this because thou and Lygiawere pursued by the anger of Poppaia, and now, occupied with her own calamity,

she may lay aside her vengeance and be more easily reconciled.

I shall see her to-night and 1 shall speak with her."

"Thanks to thee. Thou aunouncest good news to me."
"And thou bathe thyself and, rest. Thy lips are blue, and but a shadow of thee remains."

But Vinicius asked:

"Was it not stated when the first "ludus matutinus" will take place?"

"In ten days. But first they will take other prisons.

The more time we have the better. Not all is lost yet."

And speaking thus, he was saying what he did not believe himself any more, for he knew perfectly well that as Caesar, answering the request of Aliturus, had found a magnificent sounding answer, in which he compared himself with Brutus; there is no more help for Lj'gia. He concealed also, through pity, what he had heard at Senecio's, that Caesar and Tygellinus decided to select for themselves and for their friends the most beautiful Christian maidens and to disgrace them before the torture, and the rest should be given on the day of games to the pretorians and beast-keepers.

Knowing that Vinicius in any event will not wish to survive Lygia, he was purposely strengthening hope in his heart; first through compassion for him, and second, because that esthetic man preferred that Vinicius, if he has to die, should die beautiful and not with a face worn out and

grown black from pain and sleeplessness.

"I will speak to Augusta to-day," he said, ' 'more or less in this fashion: Save Lygia for' Vinicius, and I will save Bufius for thee. And I will think seriously of this. One word with Abenobarbus spoken at the proper moment may save or ruin somebody. In the worst event we will gain time."

"Thanks to thee," repeated Vinicius.

1 'Thou wilt thank me best, if thou wilt take food and rest. By Athene! Odysseus in the greatest calamity thought of sleep and food. Thou hast probably spent the whole night in the prison."

"No!" answered Vinicius. "I wanted to go to the prison, but there is am order not to let in anybody. Inquire thou, Petronius, whether the order is. for to-day only, or till the

day of games."

'This night I will know, and to-morrow morning I will tell thee how long and for what reason the order was issued.

And now, were Helios even, from sorrow to descend to the Cimmerian regions, I am going to sleep, and thou follow my

example."

And they parted, but Vinicius went to the library and began to write a letter to Lygia. When he had finished he carried it himself and handed it to the Christian centurion, who carried it to the prison at once. After a while he returned with a greeting from Lygia, and with the promise that he will to-day bring her answer.

However, Vinicius did not wish to return, and taking a seat upon a stone he waited for Lygia's letter. The sun has already risen high in the sky, and crowds of people as usual came upon the Forum through the Clivus Argentarius. Hucksters called out their wares; fortune-tellers recommended their services to the passers-by; citizens were walking with a dignified step toward the rostra, to hear the casual orators, or to narrate among themselves the latest news. As the heat was stronger, crowds of idlers took shelter under the porticos of the temples, from under which flew flocks of doves with a great flapping of wings, with their white feathers glittering in the sunshine.

From the excess of the light, under the influence of noise, warmth and immense fatigue, Vinicius' eyes began to close. The monotonous shouts of boys playing mora, and the measured tread of soldiers lulled him to sleep. A few times he raised his head and gazed at the prison, then he leaned his head against a stone and sighed like a child which falls asleep after a long weeping. And distantly visions came to him. It seemed that he is carrying Lygia at night in his arms, through an unknown vineyard, and before them Pomponia Graecina is walking with a lantern in her hand. Some voice, a voice like Petronids, called after him from a distance: "Come back!" but he did not pay any atteution to it, and continued to follow Pomponia, until they reached a cottage, on'the threshhold of which stood Peter the Apostle. Then Vinicius showed him Lygia and said: "We are coming from the arena, master, but we cannot wake her, thou wake her." But Peter answered: 'Christ himself will come to wake her. "

Afterwards the pictures began to be confused. He saw, through sleep, Nero and Poppiea, who was holding in her arms little Rufius, with a bleeding forehead which Petronius

was washing, and Tygellinus, who was strewing ashes over tables set with costly food, and Vitellius, who was devouring the food, and a multitude of other Augustians sitting at the feast. He himself was resting beside Lygia; but between the tables- lions were walking, from whose fallow beards blood was trickling. Lygia begged him to lead her away, but such a terrible weakness seized him that he could not move. A still greater disorder followed in his visions and finally everything fell into a perfect darkness.

From the deep sleep he was awakened by the sun and the shouts which sounded close to the place where he was sitting. Vinicius rubbed his eyes; the street swarmed with people, but two forerunners clothed in yellow tunic shoved aside the crowd with long canes, shouting and making room for a magnificent litterwhich was borne by four strong Egyptian

slaves.

In the litter a man was sitting dressed in white garments, whose face was not visible for he was holding a roll of papyrus close to his eyes and reading diligently.

"Make room for the noble Augustian!" shouted the

forerunner.

The streets, however, was so crowded that the litter had to stop for a moment. Then the Augustian let down the roll of papyrus and thrust forward his head, calling:

" Disperse those vagabonds! Hurry!"

Suddenly, perceiving Vinicius, he withdrew his head and quickly raised the roll of papyrus to his eyes.

And Vinicius passed his hand over his forehead thinking

that he was dreaming.

In the litter sat Chilo.

Meanwhile the forerunners opened the way and the Egyptians were to move on, when instantly the yqung tribune, who understood in one moment many things formerly incomprehensible to him, approached the litter.

"A greeting to thee, Chilo!" he said.

"Youngman," answered the Greek with dignity and haughtiness, endeavoring to give his face an expression of calmness which he had not in his soul, "I greet thee, but do not detain me, for I am hurrying to my friend, the noble Tygellinus."

Vinicius, seizing the edge of the litter, inclined towards him

and looking straight into his eyes he said in a lowered voice:

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"Didst thou betray Lygia?"

"Colossus of Memnon!" cried Chilo with terror.

But in Vinicius' eyes there was no threat, therefore the fear of the old Greek quickly passed. He thought that he is under the protection of Tygellinus and Caesar himself, that means of powers before which all trembles, and that strong slaves are surrounding him, and that Vinicius is standing unarmed before him with an emaciated face and form bent by pain.

At this thought the insolence returned to him. He fixed

his eyes on Vinicius, and said:

"And thou when I was dying of hunger hast com-

manded to flog me."

For a minute they both were silent, then the dull voice of Vinicius was heard:

"I have wronged thee, Chilo!..."

Then the Greek raised his head and snapping his fingers, which in Rome was a sign of disregard and disdain, he answered so loudly that every one could hear him:

"Friend, if thou hast a favor to ask of me, come to my house on the Esquiline at an early hour when, after my

bath, I receive my guests and clients.

And he waved his hand and at this sign the Egyptians raised the litter, while the slaves dressed in yellow tunics, began to call, waving the canes:

11 Make room for the litter of the noble Chilo Chilonides!

Room! Room!"

# CHAPTER XII.

Lygia, in a long letter written hastily, was taking an eternal leave of Vinicius. She knew that nobody was allowed to enter the prison and that only from the arena will she be able to see him. Therefore she begged him to learn when their time will come and to be present at the games, for she desired to see him once more in life. No fear was noticeable in her letter. She wrote that she and others are longing for the arena, on which they will find liberation from the prison. Expecting the arrival of Pomponia and Aulus, she begged that they too should come. In each

word was seen ecstasy and that contempt for life in which all the imprisoned were living, and at the same time an unshaken belief that promises must be fullfilled beyond the grave. "Whether now or after death Christ will liberate me, He promised me to thee through the Apostles' lips, therefore thine I am." And she implored him not to regret her and not to pine his life away. Death was not a breach of vows to her. With the confidence of a child she assured Vinicius that immediately after the torture- she will tell Christ that in Rom remained her betrothed, Marcus, who is longing with his whole soul for her. And she thought that Christ, perhaps, will permit her soul to return for a moment to him in order to tell him that she lives, that she does not remember the torture and that she is happy. Her whole letter was full of happiness and excessive hope. There was in it only one request connected with earthly affairs: that Vinicius should take her body from the spoliarium and bury her, as his wife, in a tomb in which he himself would rest some day.

He read that letter with a broken heart, but at the same time it seemed an impossibility to him that Lygia should perish under the claws of wild beasts, and that Christ should not take pity on her. However, in this was hope and confidence. Returning home, he wrote in answer that he will come every day under the walls of the Tuleianum, to wait till Christ would burst the walls and would give her to him. He ordered her to believe that He can give her back even from the circus, that the great Apostle is begging him for it, and that the moment of liberation is near. The converted centurion carried that letter to her on the following day.

But when Vinicius the following day came to the prison, the centurion, leaving the rank, first approached him and said:

"Listen tome master. Christ who had tried you, evinced His favor to thee. Last night came the freedmen of Cmsar and the prefect, in order to select from them Christian maidens for disgrace; they asked for thy betrothed, but our Lord has sent fever upon her, from which the prisoners in Tullianum are dying, so they left her. Last evening she was unconscious, and may the name of the Redeemer be praised, for that sickness which saved her from disgrace may save her from death."

Vinicius placed his hand on the arm of the soldier so as not to fall, while the latter continued:

'Thank the mercy of the Lord. They seized Linus and put him to tortures, but seeing that he is dying they returned him. Perhaps, now they will give her to thee also and Christ will return health to her."

The young tribune remained for a moment with his head downcast, then he raised it and said in a low tone: "So it is, centurion, Christ who saved her from disgrace will save her from death." And sitting under the prison wall till the evening, he returned home to send his men after Linus and to have him carried over to one of his suburban villas.

Petronius however, learning all, decided to act. He was formerly at Augusta's, and now he went to her a second time. He found her at the bedside of the little Rufius. The child, with broken head, was¹ talking in a fever, while the mother was trying to save him with despair and horror in her heart, thinking that if she will save him it would perhaps be only for this, that he should die a more terrible death.

Occupied exclusively with her own sufferiug, she did not even want to hear of Lygia and Vinicius,' but Petronius has striken terror into her. "Thou hast offended," he said to her, ' a new unknown divinity. Thou, Augusta it appears worshippest the Hebrew Jehova, but the Christians say that Christ is His Son; think therefore, whether the anger of the Father does not pursue thee. Who knows whether that which befell thee is not their vengeance, and whether the life of Rufius does not depend upon thy manner of acting."

"What dost thou wish me to do?" asked Poppæa with ter-

"Appease the angry deities."

"How?"

'Lygia is sick. Influence Cæsar or Tygellinus to give her to Vinicius."

But she asked with dispair': "Dost thou think that I can?".

"Then thou canst do something else. If Lygia. recovers, she has to go to her death. Go to Vesta's temple and demand that the "virgo magna" should accidentally find herself near Tullianum in the moment when the prisoners will be put to death, and that she should liberate that girl. The great yestal will not refuse this to thee."

"And if Lygia will die of fever?"

The Christians say that Christ is vindictive but just: perhaps thou wilt appease Him by that wish alone."

'Let Him give me some sign that he will save Rufius."

Petronius shrugged his shoulders. 'I am not coming as His messenger, 0 divinity, I say only to thee, better be in harmony with all the deities, Roman as well as foreign."

"I will go! " said Poppaea in a broken voice. Petronius

took a deep breath.

"At last Lobtained something!" he thought. And, re-

turning to Vinicius, he said to him:

"Entreat thy God that Lygia should not die of fear, for if she does not die, the great vestal will order her liberated. Augusta herself will ask her for it."

Vinicius looked on him with eyes in which fever was ap-

parent and answered: "Christ will liberate her."

And Poppaea, who, in order to save Rufius was ready to burn hecatombs to all the gods of the world, that very same evening went to the Forum and to the Vestales, intrusting the care over the sick child to the faithful nurse, Silvia, who had reared Augusta herself.

But on the Palatine the sentence against the child had already beed issued, for as soon as the litter of the empress had disappeared behind the Great Gate, two freedmen of Caesar entered the chamber in which the little Rufius was resting, one of whom threw himself upon the old Silvia and gagged her, while the other, seizing a small copper statue of

the Sphinx, stunned her with the first blow.

Then they approached Rufius. The boy, wearied by fever and unconscious, not understanding what was going on around him, was smiling to them and winked his charming eyes, as if he, tried to recognize them. But they, taking down the nurse's girdle, called cingulum, wound it around his neck and began to tighten it. The child, after having called once for his mother, died easily. After this they wrapped him in a bed sheet, and, mounting horses which were ready, they hurried to Ostia, where they threw the body into the sea.

Poppaea not meeting the great virgin, who together with the other vestals was at Vatinius, soon returned to the Palatines. Finding the empty bed and the stiff body of Silvia, she fainted and when she recovered from the swoon QUO VADIS. 401

she began to scream, and her wild shrieks were heard through the whole night and the following day.

But on the third day Caesar commanded her to come to a feast, so, dressed in an amethyst colored tunic, she came and sat silent, marvelous and menacing, like an angel of death.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

Before Flavius erected the Closseum, the amphitheatres in Rome were principally built of wood, so that nearly all of them burned down during the conflagration. Nero, however, for the performing of the promised games ordered some to be erected, and among them one immense amphitheater for which, right after the extinguishing of the fire, they began to cut down powerful trunks of trees from across the sea, by the Tiber, and on the slopes of the Atlas. As the games were to surpass all the preceeding ones in magnificence and the number of victims, spacious lodging for men and beasts were added. Thousands of men were working at the buildings day and night. They were building and ornamenting without rest. The people related wonders among themselves about the columns inlaid with bronze, amber, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and the shell of turtles from beyond the sea. Channels running along the seat filled with ice water from the mountains were to maintain a delicious coolness in the building even during the greatest heats. A gigantic purple velarium was placed so as to keep out the rays of the sun. Between the rows of seats censers were placed to burn Arabian perfumes; higher up contrivances were fixed to sprinkle saffron and verbana dew upon the spectators. The famous architects, Severus and Celler put in practice their whole knowledge in order to erect an incomparable amphitheater, which could hold such a number of the curious as none known till that time had been able to hold.

Therefore, on the day in which the ludus matutinus was to begin throngs of people waiting from daylight for the opening of the gate, listened with delight to the roai of lions, hoarse growls of panthers, and the howling of the

dogs. The beasts were not given food for two days and, moreover, bloody pieces of meat were passed before them to rouse in them rage and hunger. At moments such a tempest of wild voices was heard that the people .standing in front of the circus could not converse, and the ,more timid ones grew pale from fear. But with the rising of the sun, in the Circus precinct hymns loud but clear were heard, which were listened to with .astonishment by the people, while they were telling one another: "The Christians! the Christians!" In fact many hosts of them had been brought to the amphitheater at night, and not only from a single prison but from all of them, a few at a time. It was known in the throng that the spectacles would last whole weeks and months, but 1 they were discussing whether they would be able to finish, with that part of Christians who were intended for to-day, in a single day's time. The voices of men, women and children singing the morning hymn were so numerous that those experienced asserted that even though a hundred or too' hundred bodies were sent out at once, the beasts will be tired, will satiate themselves, and will not be able to tear to pieces all of them before evening. Others maintained that too large a number of victims being in the arena at the same time would divert their attention and not permit them to relish the spectacle properly. As the moment of the opening of the corridors, called vomitoria, leading to the interior was near, the people were enlivened, joyful and disputed about different things concerning the spectacle. Parties were beginning to be organized, which were praising the greater dexterity of lions or of tigers in tearing people. Here and theré bets were made. Others, however, spoke of gladiators, who were to appear on the arena before the Christians, and again parties were organized like Samnites, Gauls, Mirmillons, Thracians, or the net men. In the early morning larger or smaller detachments of them headed by the masters, called lanisti, began to flow into the amphitheater. Not wishing to tire themselves before the > time, they walked without their armors, often perfectly nude, often holding green twigs in hand, or crowned with flowers, young and beautiful in the morning light and full of life. Their bodies glistening from oil, powerful as if chiseled from marble, were delighting the people enamoured by forms. Many of them were personally known and shouts were heard

every minute: "Salve! Hail Furnius! Hail Leo! Hail Maximus! Hail Diomedes!" Young maidens raised their eyes full of love to them, while they were dehatingas to which one is the prettiest, and spoke jocular words to them, as if no care was weighing on them, sending kisses or shouting: "Embrace before death will embrace!" Afterwards they disappeared in the gates, from which many of them would not come out again. But new causes were continually dividing the attention of the throngs. The gladiators were followed by the mastigofori, that is, men armed with whips, whose duty it was to flog and stir up the combatants. Then mules were dragging in the direction of the spoliarium whole rows of wagons on which piles of wooden coffins were placed. At this sight the people rejoiced, concluding from their number the immensity of the spectacle. Now followed men who were to kill the wounded, disguised so that everyone of them should resemble Charon or Mercury, then the men looking after order in the circus, men distributing seats, then slaves to carry around dishes and refreshments, and finally the pretorians, whom every Caesar always had at hand in the amphitheater.

At last the vomitoria were opened and the crowds rushed into the interior. But such was the multitude of those assembled that they were entering for hours, till it was astonishing that an amphitheater could hold such a countless number of people. The roars of the beasts, feeling human exhalations, increased. The people in the circus were roaring while taking their seats like a wave during a

tempest.

Finally the city prefect; surrounded by the vigils, and following them in an unbroken chain the litters of senators, consuls, pretors, edils, public officers, palace officials, pretorian elders, patricians and exquisite women. Some litters were preceded by lictors carrying hatchets in a bunch of rods, others by crowds of slaves. The gildings of the litters, white and vari-colored dresses, feathers, earrings, jewels, and the steel of the hatchets were glittering in the sun. From the Circus shouts were heard with which the people greeted the powerful dignitaries. From time to time small detachments of pretorians were arriving.

But the priests of different temples arrived a little later, and behind them were carried the sacred virgins of Vesta.

preceded by lictors. For the beginning of the spectacle they waited only for Caesar, who, not wishing to submit the people to a tedious waiting, and desiring to win them by dispatch, soon arrived in the company of Augusta and the Augustians.

Petronius arrived among the Augustians, having Vinicius in his litter. He knew that Lygia was sick and unconscious, but as in the last days the access to the prison was most rigorously guarded against, as former guards were replaced by new ones who were forbidden to converse with the watchmen, nor to give -the least information to those who came to inquire about the prisoners, he was not certain whether she was among the victims intended for the first day of the spectacle. To the lions they could send her even if sick and unconscious. But as the victims were to be sewed into the skins of animals and sent in whole crowds upon the arena, none of the spectators could be able to ascertain whether there is one more or less among them, and nobody could recognize any of them. The watchmen and all of the amphitheater servants were bribed, while an agreement was made with the bestiarii, that they would hide Lygia in some dirk comer of the amphitheater and at night deliver her in hands of a certain tenant of Vinicius, who would immediately take her to the Albanian mountains. Petronius, admitted to the secret, advised Vinicius to go with him openly to the amphitheater and escape iD the throng close to the entrance and hasten to the subterranean prison, where, to avoid possible mistakes, he had personally to point out Lygia to the watchmen.

The watchman admitted him through a small door through which they were going out themselves. One of them, Sirus by name, took him to the Christians at once. On the way

he said:

'I don't know, master, if thou wilt find what thou lookest for; we inquired for a girl named Lygia, nobody however, gave us any answer, but perhaps for the reason that they do not believe us."

"Are there many?" asked Vinicius.

"Many, master, will have to remain till to-morrow."

"Are there any sick ones among them?"

"There are none who could not stand on their legs."

Saying this, Sirus opened a door and they entered an

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immense chamber, low and dark, for the light was coming to it solely through the grated openings separating it from the arena. At first Vinicius could not see anything and heard only a murmur of voices and shouts of the people from the amphitheater. But after a while, when his eyes were accustomed to the twilight, he perceived whole crowds of odd beings, similar to wolves and bears. These were the Christians sewed into skins of animals. Some of them were standing, others knelt in prayer. Here and there by the long hair flowing over the skin, one could guess that the victim was a woman. Mothers looking like she-wolves were carrying in their arms their children sewed up in the same shaggy manner. But from under the skins protruded bright faces, eyes in the darkness were glittering with joy and fervor. It was evident that the largest part of those people were possessed by one thought, exclusive and not of this earth, which during their life made them indifferent to all that could happen around them and that could befall them. Some,, asked by Vinicius of Lygia, were looking on him with eyes as if awakened from a sleep, not answering his questions; they smiled to him, placing, a finger over their mouths, of pointed to the iron gratings through which bright sheaves of light were penetrating. Only the children were crying here and there, terrified by the roar of the beasts, bowlings of dogs, outcries of the people and the forms of their own parents looking like beasts. Vinicius, walking beside the watchman Sirus, looking at the faces, searched, inquired, at times stumbling against the bodies of those who had fainted from the closeness of the air and the heat, and he was pushing on to the dark depth of the chamber, which seemed as spacious as the whole amphitheater.

But suddenly he stopped, for it seemed to him that close to the grating some voice known to him was heard. Listening for a while he turned back, and squeezing through the crowd, he halted. A ray of light was falling upon the face of the speaker and in this light. Vinicius recognized from under the wolf-skin the emaciated and inexorable face of Crispus.

"Repentyour sins," spoke Crispus, "for behold the moment is nearing. But whoever thinks that with death alone he will redeem his guilt commits a new sin and will be perciptated into

eternal fire. With every sin made by you during your life you were renewing the torture of our Lord, —how dare you suppose then that the torture awaiting you should redeem His one? The just and the sinful will die to-day by the same death, but the Lord will distinguish His own ones. Woe to you, for the tusks of lions will tear your bodies, but they will not tear your guilt neither your account with God. The Lord showed enough mercy when he permitted Himself to be nailed to the cross, but from now on He will judge solely who will not permit any guilt unpunished. Therefore those of you who thought that with your torture you can recompense your sins were blaspheming against the justice of God and will be plunged all the deeper. The mercy is over now and the time of God's wrath has arrived. In a while you will stand before the terrible tribunal, in face of which the just will hardly be justified. Repent your sins for the jaws of hell are open, and woe to you, husbands and wives, woe, parents and children!" And extending his bony hands, he shook them over the inclined heads, fearless, but also inexorable even in the presence of death, to which in a while all those condemned people were to go. After his words voices were heard. "Let us repent our sins!" after which silence followed and only the weeping of the children and the strikings of hands against the breasts were heard. The blood of Vinicius stiffened in his veins. He, who placed his entire hope in the mercy of Christ, had heard now that the day of wrath had arrived and that the mercy will not be obtained evep. by death ori the arena. It is true, he thought that Peter the Apostle would talk otherwise to those who were to die, but nevertheless, the words of Crispus, menacing and full of fanaticism, and this dark chamber with grating behind which was the field of torture, and the closeness of it, and the throng of victims already dressed for death, filled his soul with awe and terror. All this taken together seemed terrible to him, and a hundred times more horrible than the bloodiest battles in which he partook. The stench and the heat began to choke him. Cold sweat broke out upon his forehead. The fear that he would faint like those against whose bodies he stumbled seized him while searching in the depth of the chamber, therefore when he thought that the gratings might be opened any moment he began loudly to call Lygia and Ursus, hoping that if he

should not find them, somebody knowing them might answer him.

Instantly, in fact, a man dressed like a bear pulled at his toga and said:

'Master, they remained in the prison. I was led out last and I saw her sick upon the bed."

"Who art thou?" asked Vinicius.

'The digger in whose cottage the Apostle baptized thee.

I was imprisoned three days ago and to-day I shall die."

Vinicius breathed freely. Entering here he wished to find Lygia, but now he was willing to thank Christ that she is not here and to see in this a sign of His mercy.

Meanwhile the digger pulled him by his toga once more

and said:

'Dost thou remember, master, that it was myself who took thee to the vineyard of Cornelius, where in the shed the Apostle was teaching?"

"I remember," answered Vinicius.

"After that I saw him on the day before I was imprisoned. He blessed me and said that he would come to the amphitheater to bless the perishing. I would like to look at him in the minute of death, for then it will be easier for me to die; if thou knowest where he is, then tell me."

Vinicius lowered his voice and answered:

' 'He is among Petronius' men disguised as a slave. I don't know where they selected seats, out I will return to the Circus and I will see. Thou look at me when you will enter the arena, and I will rise and turn iny head in their direction. Then thou will find him with thy eyes."

"Thanks to thee, master and peace be with thee."

"May the Saviour be merciful to thee."

"Amen."

Vinicius went out from the cuniculum and set out for the amphitheater, where he had a place by Petronius, among other Augustians.

"Is she there?" asked Petrouius.

"No; she remained in the prison."

'Listen what came to my head, but listening, look for instance at Nigidia so that it should seem that we talk of her hair dressing. Tygellinus and Chilo are looking at us now. Listen then: let them put Lygia in a coffin as if dead at night, and thou surmisest the rest."

"Yes," answered Vinicius.

Further conversation was interrupted by Tullius Senecio, who inclining toward them, said:

"Are you aware whether weapons will be given the Christians?"

"We don't know," answered Petronius.

"I would prefer that they should give them weapons," said Tullius, 1 'otherwise the arena will become too similar to butchers' shambles. But what a splendid amphitheater!"

In fact the sight was magnificent. The lower seats crowded with togas, were white as snow. In the gilded podium sat Cæsar with a diamond necklace, having a golden wreath upon his head, and beside him the beautiful and gloomy Augusta; close on both side the vestals, high officials, senators in bordered mantles, high military officers in glittering armors, in a word, all that was powerful, splendid and rich in Rome. In farther rows knights were sitting, while higher up darkened in a circle a sea of human heads, above which from pillar to pillar were suspended garlands of roses, lilies, saffron, ivy and grapevine.

The people were conversing loudly, shouting to one another, singing, at times bursting out with laughter over some witty word which was then sent from row to row, and stamping from impatience in order to hasten the spectacle.

At last the stamping became like thunder claps and continuous. Then the city prefect, -who with the splendid train rode around the arena, gave a sign with his handkerchief which was answered in the ampitheater by universal, "Aaa!" ... from thousands of breasts.

The spectacle was usually begun by hunts of wild beasts, in which different barbarians from the North and the South excelled—but this time they were to have more than enough beasts, so it was begun by the andabates, that is, men dressed in helmets without the openings for the eyes, hence fighting blindly. Some fifteen of them, entering upon the arena, began to wave their swords in the air, while the mastigofori by means of long forks were shoving one towards another so they should come together. The more exquisite' spectators were looking indifferently and with contempt upon such a spectacle, but the people were amused by the awkward movements of the fencers, and when it happened that the fencers met with their backs they burstêd

into loud laughter, shouting, "To the right!" "To the left!" "Straightahead!" and often misleading the adversaries purposely. A few couples, however, clinched and the combat began to be bloody. The more obstinate combatants were throwing their shields away and holding each other with the left hand, they fought with the right ones till death. Whoever fell raised up his fingers, imploring mercy in this way, but at the beginning of the spectacle the people demanded usually the death of the wounded, especially when the andabates were concerned, who, having their faces covered, remained unknown to the people. Slowly the number of the combatants was decreasing and when finally only two of them remained they were pushed one to the other so that meeting, they both fell upon the sand and stabbed each other upon it. Then amidst, the shouts: "Peractumest!" ("It is done!") the servants removed the corpses, while young boys raked the bloody traces upon the arena and sprinkled them over with saffron leaves.

Now a more dignified combat should begin, arousing the curiosity not only of the mob but also of exquisite men, during which j'oung patricians were making immense bets, oftentimes losing all to the last thread. Immediately tablets upon which were wTitten the names of the favorites and the number of sestertia which he would bet on his choice, began to circulate from hand to hand. Spectati, that is, combatants who had appeared already on the arena and were victorious, were gaining most adherents, but among the betting spectators were also those who bet considerable amounts upon new and absolutely unknown gladiators, in the hope that in the event of their victory, they would sweep gigantic profits. Ceesar himself was betting, and the priests, and the Vesta's virgins, and the senators, and knights, and the people. Vulgar people, when money failed them, were often betting with their own liberty. Therefore they awaited with heart beating and even with fear for the appearance of the fencers, and more than one made loud vows to gods to obtain their protection fortheir favorite.

In fact, when the piercing sounds of trumpets were heard, a silence of expectation began in the amphitheater. Thousands of eyes turned to the great bolts of the gate, to which approached a man disguised for Charon and in the midst of universal silence knocked at them three times with a ham-

met, as if calling out to death those who were hidden behind them. Then both halves of the gate opened slowly, showing a black opening from which the gladiators began to run out upon the bright arena.

They were coming in divisions of twenty-five men. Thracians, Mirmillions, Samnites, Gaulsse, parately, all armed heavily, and finally the retiarii, holding in one hand a net and in the other a trident. At their sight here and there among the benches applause arose which soon changed to one gigantic and continuous tempest. From the top to the bottom were seen excited faces, clapping hands and open mouths, from which shouts were bursting. The gladiators encircled the whole arena with an even and elastic step, their weapons and their rich armors glittering, and then they halted in front of the emperor's podium, haughty, calm and splendid. The shrill sound of a horn silenced the applause, and then the combatants extended up their right hands and, raising their eyes and heads toward Caesar, they began to Shout or rather sing with protracted voices:

Ave, Caesar imperator, "Morituri te salutant!"

Then they separated, quickly occupying their places upon the arena. They had to attack each other in whole divisions, but first the most famous fencers were permitted to have series of single combats, in which, the strength, courage and the dexterity of the adversaries were shown best. In fact, instantly from among the Gauls a gladiator appeared, well known to the lovers of the amphitheater under the name of "The Butcher" (Lanio), a victor in many games. With a large helmet upon his head and in the armor enclosing his powerful breast in front and rear, he looked in the light upon the yellow arena like a gigantic, glistening beetle. No less famous was netmau Calendio, who came out against him

Among the spectators betting was begun:

"Five hundred sestertias on the Gaul!"

"Five hundred on Calendio!"
"By Hercules! a thousand!"

"Two thousand!"

The Gaul, meanwhile, reaching the middle of the arena, began to withdraw again with pointed sword and, lowering

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his head, he was 'Carefully observing his adversary through the corner in his eyes, while the beautifully shaped Calendio, statuelike, completely naked save a girdle around his loins, was speedily encircling his heavy enemy, gracefully waving the net, lowering or raising his trident and singing the usual song of thenetmen:

## "I won't have thee! I look for fish, Why dost thou flee, O Gaul?"

But the Gaul was not fleeing, for after awhile he stopped and, standing in one place, he began to turn with an impercepible movement only so as to always have the enemy in front. There was something dreadful in his figure and monstrously large head. The spectators understood perfectly that this heavy bronze encased body was preparing for a sudden throw which might decide the battle. The netman meanwhile sprang up to him and then sprang away, making with his triple forks such quick movements that human sight could with difficulty follow them. The sound of the teeth against the shield was heard several times, but the Gaul did not even stagger, giving an evidence of his gigantic strength. His whole attention seemed to be collected not upon the trident, but upon the net, which circled continually over his head like an ominous bird. The spectators, holding their breath, were observing the masterly play of the gladiators. Lanio, finding the moment, finally rushed upon the adversary, but the latter with an equal speed passed under his sword and straightening himself threw his net.

The Gaul, turning on the spot, stopped it with the shield, after which both sprang apart. In the amphitheater, shouts: "Mactel" were heard, while in the lower rows new bets began to be made: Caesar himself, who at first conversed with the vestal Rubria, and till now did not pay much attention to

the spectacle, turned his head toward the arena.

They began to fight again so skilfully and with such an exactness in their movements that at times it seemed that not their death or-life were concerned here, but they wished to show their dexterity. Lanio twice escaping the net, began again to recede toward the edge of the arena. But then those who were betting against him, not wishing him to rest, began to shout: "Attack!" The Gaul obeyed, and attacked. The netman's arm was covered suddenly with

blood and his net hung down. Lanío contracted himself and sprang, wishing to deliver the last blow. But in the same instant Calendio, who purposely feigned his inability to master the net, leaned to one side, escaped the blow and, thrusting his trident between the opponent's knees, he felled him to the ground.

The latter wanted to rise, but in a twinkle of an eye he was entwined with the fatal cords, in which he entangled more with every movement of his hands and feet. Meanwhile blows of the trident were nailing him time after time to the earth. Once more he exerted himself, supported on his hand and tried to rise, in vain! He raised his failing hand to his head, he was no longer able to hold the sword and fell on his back. Calendio pressed his neck to the ground with the teeth of the trident and, resting both hands on its handle, he turned in the direction of the emperor's box.

The whole Circus began to tremble from the applause and human roar. For those who were betting on Calendio, he was at that moment greater than Crnsar, but for that very reason the malice in their hearts against Lanio disappeared, who at the cost of his blood filled their pockets. So the demands of the people divided. On all the benches were seen signs—half for death, half for mercy, but the netman looked only toward the box of Caesar and the vestals, waiting what they would decide.

Unfortunately Nero disliked Lanio, for at the last games before the fire, betting against him, he lost a considerable amount, so he stretched his hand out of the podium and

turned his thumb to the ground.

The vestals immediately repeated the sign. Then Calendo kneeled upon the Gaul's breast, drew out a short kpife which, he wore at his belt, and pushing apart the armor near the neck of the adversary, he drove the three-edged blade in his throat up to the hilt.

"Peractum est!" sounded voices in the amphitheater.

Lanio quivered for some time like a slaughtered ox and kicked the sand with his feet, after which he stretched out and remained motionless.

Mercury did not have to realize with heated iron whether he was yet living. Instantly he was removed and other pairs appeared,- which was followed by the combat of whole divisions. The people were taking part in it with their souls, hearts and eyes; they howled, roared, whistled, clapped, laughed, encouraged the combatants. The gladiators divided into two troups, fought upon the arena like wild beasts; breast struck against breast, bodies were entangled in deathly embrace, the powerful limbs were cracking in their joints, swords drowned in breasts and in bellies, mouths grown pale spurted out the blood upon the sand. Some fifteen novices were, near the end, seized by such a dreadful fear that, escaping the confusion, they began to run away, but the mastigofori drove them back to the battle with whips ending in lead tips. Large dark spots were formed upon the sand, more and more naked or armed bodies were lying piled up like sheaves. Those living fought upon corpses, stumbled against the armors, shields, cut their feet against broken weapons and fell. The people lost self command from happiness, they were intoxicating themselves with death, breathed it, satiated their eyes with its sight, and with delight drew in their lungs its exhalations.

Finally almost all of the conquered were dead. Only a few wounded ones knelt down in the middle of the arena and, staggering, stretched forth, their hands to the spectators, begging mercy. Prizes, wreaths, olive-twigs were distributed among the victors and a moment of rest came, which by order of the all powerful Cæsar was changed to a feast. Perfumes were ignited in the vases. The sprinklers bedewed the people with saffron and violet-rain. Cooling drinks, baked meats, sweet pastry, wine, olive-oil and fruits were carried around. The people devoured, conversed and shouted in honor of Cæsar, in order to bring a greater munificence. In fact, when the hunger and thirst was satisfied,, hundreds of slaves brought baskets full of gifts, from which young boys dressed for Cupids were taking out various things and were throwing them with both hands between the benches. In the moment when the tickets— '1 tesseri', '—were distributed a fight arose; the people pushed, threw down and trampled upon each other, cried for help, jumped over rows of seats and choked themselves in the terrible throng, for whoever received a lucky number might win even a house with a garden, a slave, a magnificent dress or a rare wild beast, which he could sell afterwards to the amphitheater. For this reason such turmoils were made that oftentimes the pretordans had to bring them to order, while after every distribution people were carried out from the amphitheater with

broken hands and feet, or trampled even to death.

But the richer ones did not partake in the fight for the tickets. The Augustians amused themselves with the sight of Chilo, and with sneering at his vain efforts to show the people that he can look on a combat and bloodshed just as well as anyone else. But in vain did the unlucky Greek contract his brows, bite his lips and squeeze his fists so that the finger-nails were entering his palms. His Greek nature as well as his personal cowardice could not suffer

such spectacles. His face grew pale, on his forehead stood drops of perspiration, his lips grew blue, his eyes sunk in, bis teeth began to clatter and his body was seized by fever. After the fight was ended he recovered a little, but when he was attacked by their tongues he was possessed by a sudden

•anger and began to defend himself desperately.

"Ha, Greek! the sight of a torn human skin is unbearable ito thee!" spoke Vatinius, pulling him by his beard.

But Chilo showed his two last yellow teeth and answered:

"My father was not a cobbler, so I can not patch it."

"Macte! habet!" a few voices called.

But others sneered.

"He is not to blame that he has a piece of cheese instead of a heart in his breast!" cried Senecio.

"Thou art not to blame that instead of - a head thou hast

a bladder," answered Chilo.

"Perhaps thou wilt become a gladiator! thou wouldst look well with the net on the arena."

' Should I catch thee in it, I should catch a stinking

hoopoe."

"And how will it be with the Christians?" asked Festus from Lyguria: "wouldst thou not wish to become a dog and bite them?"

" I would not wish to become thy brother."

"Thou Mseotian leper."
"Thou Lygurian mule."

"Evidently thy skin is itching, but I do not advise thee to ask me to scratch it."

<sup>1</sup> Scratch thyself. If thou wilt scratch off thy own pimples, thou wilt destroy what is best in thee."

And in this way they were attacking him and he de-

fended himself bitingly among universal laughter. Caesar clapped his hands, repeated, "Macte!" and stirred them up. After a while, however, Petronius approached and touching with his carved ivory cane the shoulder of the Greek, he said coldly:

'1 That is well, philosopher, but in one thing thou hast erred: the gods created thee a pickpocket, and thou hast be-

come a demon, and therefore thou wilt not hold out."

The old man looked at him with his red eyes; this time, however he did not find a ready offense. For a while he was silent, then lie answered as if with an effort:

"I will hold out!"

But meanwhile the trumpets gave a sign that the interruption in the spectacle was ended. People began to leave the passages in which they collected themselves for the stretching of their limbs and conversation. A general movement and the usual disputes for the seats previously occupied arose. Senators and patricians hastened to their places.

The noise was hushing slowly and the amphitheater was coming to order. A crowd of men appeared on the arena to rake the lumps of sand stuck with blood here and there.

The turn of the Christians was coming. But, as it was a new spectacle for the people and as nobody knew how they would bear themselves, all awaited them with a certain curiosity. The disposition of the mob was attentive, since they expected extraordinary scenes, but unfriendly. For those people who were to appear presently have burnt Rome and its ancient treasures. For they nourished themselves with the blood of infants, poisoned the waters, cursed the whole human race and committed the most foul crimes. The most cruel punishments were not sufficient to the aroused hatred, and if any fear was seizing their hearts it was a fear whether the tortures would be equal to the offenses of those ominous condemned.

Meanwhile the sun had risen higher in the heavens, and its rays, straining through the purple velarium, filled the amphitheater with bloody light. The sand assumed a fiery shade and in these gleams, in human faces as well as in the emptiness of the arena which was to be filled presently with human torture, there was something terrible. It seemed as if horror and death were hovering in the air. The mob, usually jolly, were unrelenting in their silence under the in-

fluence of hatred. The faces bore an obstinate expression.

Suddenly the prefect gave a signal; then appeared the same old man dressed as Charon, who called the gladiators to death, and walking around the arena with a slow step, amidst a dull silence, he knocked thrice again on the door with a hammer.

A muttering was heard in the whole amphitheater:

"The Christians! The Christians!"

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The iron gratings creaked; in the dark openings the usual shouts of the mastigofori were heard: "To the sand!" and in one minute the arena was peopled with crowds like satyrs covered with skins. All ran rather fast, and reaching the middle of the circle, they knelt one by am. er with upraised hands. The people judged that they were imploring for mercy, and enraged with such a cowardice they began to stamp, whistle, throw empty wine vessels, gnawed bones, and roared: "The beasts! the beasts!"

But suddenly something unexpected happened. From the center of the shaggy crowd singing voices arose, and in the same moment a song sounded, which was heard the first time in a Roman circus:

"Christus regnat!!"....

Then astonishment seized the people. The condemned were singing with their eyes raised to the velarium. They saw pale faces but as if inspired. All understood that those men did not seem to the Grant of the Grant

notice the Circus, the people, the senate, or Caesar.

"Christus regnat!" sounded louder and louder, and up in the highest benches more than one asked himself the question: "What is it that is going on and who is that Christ who reigns in the mouths of these people who are going to die?" But meanwhile a new, grating was opened and with a wild speed and barking whole herds of dogs rushed in, gigantic yellow dogs from Peloponnesus, striped dogs from the Pyrenees, and some looking like wolves from Hibernia, purposely famished, their sides sunk in and their eyes bloody. The Christians, having finished the song, were kneeling immovable, as if petrified, repeating with one timid chorus: "Pro Christo! pro Christo!" The dogs, scenting

people under the skins of beasts and astonished with their immovability, at first did not dare to attack them. Some

stood up against the walls of the boxes as if they wished toget at the spectators, others were running around, barking furiously as if pursuing some unseen animal. The people became angry. Thousands of voices, sounded; some of the spectators imitated the roaring of beasts; others were barking like dogs, others yet were urging the dogs in all languages. The amphitheater trembled from shrieks. The enraged dogs now began to rush at those kneeling and then to draw back again, chattering with their teeth, till finally one of the yellow dogs drove his teeth into the neck of a woman kneeling in front and dragged her under him.'

Then tens of them rushed to the center of the crowd as if through a breach. The mob ceased to roar in order to observe with greater attention. In the midst of the howls and barking the plaintive voices of men and women: "Pro Christo! pro Christo!" were yet heard, but on the arena quivering masses of the bodies of dogs and men were formed. The blood was now gushing in a stream from the torn bodies. The dogs were wresting from each other the bloody human limbs. The smell of the blood and torn entrails drowned the Arabian perfumes and filled the entire Circus. At last only here and there were seen single kneeling figures, which were soon covered by the moving, howling masses.

Vinitius, who when the Christians rushed in arose and turned, so as to show to the digger the direction in which, among Petronius' men the Apostle was concealed-sat down again and looked with glassy eyes upon the horrible spectacle. At first the fear that the digger might have been, mistaken and that Lygia might be among the victims, benumbed him completely, but when he heard voices, ' 'Pro-Christo!" when he saw the tortures of so many victims, who, dying, stood by their truth and their God, another feeling possessed him, penetrating like a terrible pain, but nevertheless irresistible, that as Christ himself died in torture, and as thousands are now perishing for him, as a sea of blood is pouring out—then one drop of blood does not signify anything and it is even a sin to ask for mercy. This thought came to him from the sight of the arena, and was penetrating him together with the groans of the dying, together with the odor of their blood. However, he prayed and repeated with parched lips: "Christi Christ! And Thy" Apostle prays for her! "Then he, forgot himself, became unconscious of where he was; it seemed only to **him that the** blood upon the arena was rising, and will flow out from the Circus upon the whole of Rome. Besides he heard nothing, neither the howling of the dogs, nor. the shrieks of the people, nor the voices, of Augustians, who began to cry suddenly:

"Chilo fainted!!"

' 'Chilo fainted I " repeated Petronius, turning toward the Greek.

And the latter really fainted and sat white as linen, with his, head turned back and with mouth wide open, like **a** corpse.

In the same instant new victims sewed up in skins were

pushed into the arena.

These kneeled immediately like their predecessors, but the fatigued dogs did not want to tear them. Only a few of them rushed upon the' nearest, while the others, lying down and raising their bloody jaws, began to work their sides and to breathe heavily. Then the mob, uneasy but intoxicated with blood and enraged, began to call with shrill voices:

"The lions! the lions! Let out the lions!"

The lions were to be kept for the next day, but in the amphiteaters the people imposed their will upon all, even upon Caesar. Caligula only, daring and changeable in his desires, ventured to oppose them, and it happened that he even ordered the crowds to be clubbed, but he too yielded most frequently. Nero, to whom an applause was dearer than anything in the world, never resisted, so he did not resist now, all the more when the crowds, enraged after the conflagration had to be pacified, and the blame for the disaster had to be thrown upon the, Christians.

So he gave a sign to open the cuniculum, upon seeing which the people became quiet. The creaking of the gratrings behind which were the lions was heard. The dogs at their sight, gathered in one mass on the other side of the circle, whining loudly, while the lions began to roll one after the other into the arena, gigantic, yellowish, with large shaggy heads. Caesar himself, turned his wearied face toward them and placed an emerald to his eye to observe them closer. The Augustians greated them with applause, the people counted them upon their flngdrs, observing wagerly at the same time the impression which their sight

would make upon the Christiana kneeling in the center, who again began to repeat words incomprehensible for many and

irritable to all; "Pro Christo! pro Christo! "....

But the lions, although famished, did not hurry toward the victims. The reddish gleam upon the arena dazzled them, therefore they winked their eyes as if dazed; some of them stretched their gold-like bodies lazily, while others, opening their jaws, were yawning, in order to show to the spectators their terrible fangs. But afterwards the smell of blood and torn bodies began to act upon them. Soon their movements became uneasy, their manes became bristled, their nostrils drew in the air with a rattling noise. One rushed suddenly at a corpse of a woman with torn face and placing his fore-paws upon the body, began to lick the stiffened blood-lumps with his prickly tongue, while another approached a Christian who was holding in his arms a child sewed up in a fawn's skin.

The child trembled from crying and weeping, convulsively embracing its father's neck, while the latter, desiring to prolong its life even for a moment, tried to tear it from his neck and give it to those kneeling farther. Put the crying-and the movement irritated the lion. Suddenly he gave out a short, broken roar, crushed the child with one blow of the paw, and seizing in his jaws the skull of the father, shat-

tered it in a twinkle of an eye.

At the sight of all this other lions rushed at the crowd of Christians. A few women could not stop cries of horror, but the people drown them in the applause, which, however, soon ceased for the desire of seeing got the better of them.

Then the horrible things were seen: heads entirely disappearing in the jaws, breasts opened wide with one cut of the fangs, hearts and lungs torn out; they heard the crackling of the bones in the teeth. Some lions, seizing the victims by their sides or spines, were running in mad jumps through the arena, as if looking for a covered place where they could devour them; others in mutual fight, rose up on their hind legs embracing each other with their paws and filling the amphitheater with thunder:

People rose from their seats. Others, leaving their seats, descended a few passages lower to see better, and crowded one another to death. It seemed that the excited crowds would rush at last upon the very arena and would tear the:

Christians, together with the lions. At times an inhuman shrieking was heard, at times applause, then roaring grumbling, chattering of the fangs, howling of the dogs; at times only groans.

Casar, holding the emerald near his eye was now looking attentively. The face of Petronius assumed an expression of disgust and contempt. Chilo was carried out from the

Circus.

And new victims were continually pushed out from the cuniculum.

• From the highest row in the amphitheater Peter the Apostle was looking at them. Nobody saw him, for all heads were turned toward the arena, so he arose, and as in the vineyard of Cornelius he blessed for death and eternity those who were to be captured so now he blessed with the sign of the cross those perishing under the fangs of beasts, and their blood and their torture and the dead bodies changed to shapeless masses and their souls flying away from the bloody sand. Some of them raised their eyes toward him and then their faces grew bright, and they smiled, seeing high above themselves the sign of the cross. But his heart was breaking and he spoke: "O Lord, by Thy will, for Thy glory, for the evidence of the truth, those sheep of mine are perishing. Thou hast ordered me to feed them, so I give them over to Thee; and Thou, 0 Lord, count them over, take them, heal their wounds, soothe their pain and give to them even more happiness than the tortures they suffered here I"

And he blessed one after the other, a crowd after a crowd, with such a great love, as if they were his children whom he gives directly into the hands of Christ. Suddenly Casar, whether it was from frenzy or wishing that the spectacle should surpass anything ever seen in Rome, whispered a few words to the city prefect, and the latter, leaving the podium, instantly betook himself to the cuniculum. And even the people were astonished, when in awhile they saw the gratings opening again. Now beasts of every kind were let out. Tigers from the Euphrates, Numidian panthers, bears, wolves, hyenas and jackals. The whole arena was covered as if with a moving wave of skins, striped yellow, faded yellow, dark brown and spotted. A turmoil arose in which eyes could not distinguish anything save a terrible wrestling and turning of the backs of the beasts. The spectacle lost the appear-

ance of reality and changed, as if to an orgy of blood, as if to a horrible dream, as if to a monstrous vision of a mad imagination. The measure was overdone. Among th& roars, howling and whining were heard here and there among the spectators on the benches piercing, spasmodic laughs of women, whose strength was at last exhausted. The people were horrified. Faces grew dark. Various;

voices began to shout: "Enough! enough!" But it was easier to let in the beasts than to chase them out. Caesar, however, found a way to clear the arena of them, coupled with a new pastime for the people. In all the passages between the benches appeared detachments of blacks with feathers and earrings, Numidians with bows in their hands. The people guessed what would take place and greeted them with shouts of satisfaction, while they approached the railing, and placing arrows upon the strings, began to shoot from their bows into the crowd of beasts. In fact this was a new spectacle. The slim black bodies inclined backwards, bending the flexible bows and sending arrow after arrow. The buzzing of the bow strings and thewhistling of the feathered arrows were mingled with, the howling of the beasts and shouts of admiration from the spectators. Wolves, bears, panthers and the men who remained alive yet were falling side by side. Here and there a lion, feeling an arrow in his side, turned his wrinkled jaws with a quick movement of rage, in order to seize and crush the staff of the arrow. Others were groaning from, pain. The smaller beasts falling into fright, were running blindly through the arena, or struck their heads against thegratings, and meanwhile the arrows buzzed continually, until all that lived laid down in the last quiverings of death.

Then hundreds of slaves rushed in upon the arena with spades, shovels, brooms, wheel-barrows, baskets for the removing of the entrails, and sacks with sand. A feverish activity began. Instantly it was cleared of the corpses, blood and dirt raked over, smoothed and covered with, a thick layer of fresh sand. Then Cupids rushed in, strewing leaves of roses, lilies and various flowers. The censers, were ignited again and the velarium was taken down, for" the sun had descended considerably.

The people, looking with astonishment at each other, asked themselves what spectacle awaits them yet to-day.

Indeed, such a one was awaiting them as nobody expected. For Cassar, who a short while ago left the podium, appeared suddenly upon the flowered arena, arrayed in a purple cloak and golden wreath. Twelve singers with cithras in their hands followed him, while he, holding a silver lute, walked to the center with a solemn step, and bowing to the spectators repeatedly, he raised his eyes toward heaven and for some time stood so as if waiting for an inspiration.

Then he struck the strings and began to sing:

" O thou radiant son of Leta, Ruler of Tenes, Chilos. Chrysos, Thou having in thy care ' The Ilions' sacred city, Couldst give it to the Achives' anger, And suffer that the holy altars, Always burning to thy honor, Be stained with the Trojans' blood? To thee old men their trembling hands. To thee old men their trembling hands,
O, silver-bowed, at a distance aiming.
All mothers from the depths of their bosoms,
Raised to thee their tearful voice,
Imploring pity for their children.
Stones would be moved by those complaints, And thou, Smintheus, to the human suffering. Wert less feeling than a stone!"

The song was slowly passing into an elegy plaintive and full of suffering. Silence reigned in the Circus. After a while Caesar, himself moved, continued to sing:

> "Thou couldst with sound of heaven's lute. Drown the cries and laments of hearts, For at the mournful sound of this song Which raises from the dust and ashes, Fire, disaster, day of peril, This day even a mortal eye, Like a flower with dew, fills with a tear, Smintheus, where wert thou then?"

There his voice quivered and his eyes grew moist. Tears appeared on the eyelids of the vestals,—the people listened silently before they bursted out with a storm of applause unceasing for a long time.

Meanwhile from the outside through the vomitoria opened for the draughts' sake, reached the creaking of wagons upon which were laid the bloody remains of the Christians, men, women and children, to take them out to the horrible pits called puticuli.,

And Peter grasping his head,-cried: "O Lord! Lord! To whom didst Thou give the rule over the world?- And

why dost thou wish to found Thy capital in this city?"

# CHAPTER XIV.

Meanwhile the sun descended in the west and seemed tomelt in the evening dawn. The spectacle was ended. The. crowds began to leave the amphitheater and pour out. through the exits, called vomitoria, to the city. Only the Augustians delayed, waiting till the multitude had passed. A whole crowd of people, leaving their places, gathered near the podium, in which Caesar appeared again to listen to the praises. Although the spectators spared no applause to him. immediately after the end of the song, this was not enough for him, for he expected an enthusiasm reaching frenzy. In vain did praising hymns now sound, in vain did the vestals kiss his "godlike" hands, and Rubria bowed, so her reddish head touched his breast. Nero was not satisfied and could not conceal it. He also was astonished and disturbed because Petronius was silent. Some praising and at the same time knowingly defining the merits of the song from his mouth would be a great consolation for Nero at that moment. Finally, not being able to endure it any longer, he nodded at him, and when the latter entered the podium, he said: "Tell."

But Petronius answered coldly:

"'I am silent, for I cannot find words. Thou hast surpassed thyself."

"So it seemed to me also, and still these people?..."

"Canst thou demand from mongrels that they should understand poetry?"

' 'So thou hast also noticed that they did not thank me as

I deserved?"

For thou hast chosen a bad moment."

"Why?

"Because brains, full of the odor of blood cannot listen attentively."

Nero clinched his fists and answered:

"Oh, those Christians! They burned Rome and now they wrong me. What punishments will I invent for them yet?"

Petronius saw that he took a bad road and that his words obtained a result quite contrary to the one which he intended, so, wishing to turn Caesars' mind in another direction, he inclind toward him and whispered:

"Thy song is wonderful, but only one remark will I make to thee: in the fourth line of the third strophe, the rhythm

leaves something to be desired."

And-Nero blushing with shame as if caught in a foul deed, looked with fear and answered in a low tone; "Thou perceivest everything! I know! I will make it over; but none else noticed it. Did they? And thou for the sake of gods don't tell this to anybody, if thy life is dear to thee."

To this Petronius frowned and answered, as if with an

outburst of weariness and disdain:

"TLiou canst, 0 godlike, condemn me to death, if I stand in thy way, but do not scare me with it, for the gods know best whether I am afraid of it." And saying this he began to look straight into Caesar's eyes, and the latter answered after a while:

<sup>1</sup> 'Don't be angry. Thou knowest that I love thee."

"A bad omen!" thought Petronius. "I wanted to invite you to-day to a feast," continued Nero, "but I prefer to shut myself up and polish that accursed line of the third strophe. Besides thee the error may have been noticed by S'-neea and perhaps Secundus Carinas, but I will at once get rid of them."

Saying this he called Seneca and declared to him that, together with Acratus and Secundus Carinas, he sends him to Italy and to all the provinces for money, which he commands them to collect from cities, villages, from famous temples,—in a word from every place where it could be found or extorted. But Seneca, who understood that an office of a pillager, sacrilege and robber is intrusted to him, refused bluntly. "I have to go to the country sir," he said, "and there to await death, for I am old and my nerves are sick,"

The Iberian nerves of Seneca, stronger than those of Chilo, perhaps were not sick, but his health in general was bad, for he looked like a shadow, and his hair of late grew

completely white.

Nero too, looking at him, thought that may be he will not have long to wait for his death and answered: "I don't want to expose thee to a journey if thou art sick, but through my love which I have for thee, I wish to have thee near; so, instead of going to the country, thou wilt shut thyself in thy house and wilt not leave it."

Then he laughed and said: "If I send Acratus and Carinas alone, I send wolves for sheep. Who will I set overthem?"

"Me, lord!" said Domicius Afer.

"No! I don't want to bring down upon Rome the wrath of Mercury, whom you would put to shame with your thievishness. I have to have some stoic like -Seneca, or like my new friend—philosopher Chilo." Saying this he began to look around and asked:

"But what happened with Chilo?"

Chilo who, recovering in the fresh air, returned to the amphitheater for the song of Csesar, approached and said:

"I am here, thou radiant offspring of the sun and the-

moon. I was sick, but thy song made me well."

"I will send thee to Achsea," said Nero. "Thou hast to know to a penny how much there is in every temple."

' 'Do so, Zeus, and the gods will give thee such a tribute

as they never yet gave to anyone."

" 'I would do it, but I don't want to deprive thee of the sight of the spectacles."

"Baal!" said Chilo.

But the Augustians, glad that Caesar's humor was better,, began to laugh and cry: "No, sir! Do pot deprive this cour-

ageous Greek of the sight of the spectacles."

"But deprive me, sir, of the sight of these clamorous capitolian geese, whose brains taken together would not fill one acorn shell," answered Chilo. "I am writing, 0 first-born son of Apollo, a Greek hymn in thy honor, and for this reason I desire to spend a few days in ..the temple of Muses, in order to beg them for inspiration."

"O no!" cried Nero—"Thou wishest to evade the follow-

ing spectacles. Nothing of that!"

"I swear to thee, sir, that I am writing a hymn."

'Then thou wilt write it at night. Beg Diana for inspir-

ation—she is a sister of Apollo anyway."

Chilo dropped his head, looking with malice upon those present, who began to laugh again—while Ceesar, turning to-Senecio and Suilius Nerulinus, said:

' 'Imagine that from the Christians intended for to-day we-

were able to settle hardly a half."

To this answered the old Aquilus Regulus, a great connoisseur of everything' pertaining to the amphitheater: 'These spectacles in which men 'sine armis et sine arte' are figuring, are lasting almost as long and are less interesting."

"I will order to give them weapons," answered Nero.

But the superstitious Vestinus awakened suddenly from a meditation and asked with a mysterious voice:

'Did you notice that they see something when dying? They look upwards and die as if without any sufferings. I

.am certain that they see something." ...

Saying this he raised his eyes toward the opening of the amphitheater, above which night had begun to spread its velarium studded with stars. Others, however, answered with laughs and with jocular suppositions as to what the Christians see in the moment of death. Meanwhile Csesar gave a sign to the slaves holding torches and left the Circus, and after him the vestals, senators, officials and Augustians,

The night was clear and warm. In front of the Circus were yet crowds of people, curious to see the departure of the Caesar, but gloomy and silent. Here and there applause was heard, but hushed down instantly. From the spoliarium the creaking carts were continually carrying away the

bloody remains of the Christians.

Petronius and Vinicius walked silently. Only near the villa Petronius asked:

"Didst thou think of what I have told thee?"

"Yes," answered Vinicius.

'Dost thou believe that now this is a case of greatest importance for me also? I must liberate her in spite of Csesar and Tj<sup>\*</sup>gellinus. This is like a battle in which I am bent to conquer—this is like a play in which I w ant to win, even at a cost of my own skin... This day strengthened me in my conviction."

"May Christ repay thee!"

"Thou wilt see."

Thus conversing they stopped before the doors of the villa and alighted from the litter. In the same instant some dark figure approached them and asked:

"Is the noble Vinicius here?"

"Yes," answered the tribune, "what dost thou wish?

"I am Nazarius the son of Myriam; I come from the prison and bring thee news of Lygia."

Vinicius placed his hand upon Nazarius' shoulder and by

the gleam of the torch he began to look into his eyes, not being able to speak a word, but Nazarius guessed the question dying on his lips and answered:

"She is living yet. Ursus sends me to thee, master, to

tell that she prays and repeats thy name."

And Vinicius answered:

"Glory to Christ who can restore her to me."

Then, taking Nazarius he led him to the library. In a

while came Petronius to listen to their conversation.

'The disease saved her from disgrace, for the executioners are fearing," spoke the young boy. "Ursus and Glaucus the physician watch over her day and night."

"Have the same guards remained?"

"Yes, master, and she is in their chamber. . Those prisoners who were in the lower prison, all died of fever or were choked by the close air."

"Who art thou?" asked Petronius.

"The noble Vinicius knows me. I am a son of the widow with whom Lygia lived."

"And a Christian?"

The boy looked inquiringly at Vinicius, but seeing that the latter was praying at this moment, he raised his head and said:

"So it is."

"How canst thou enter freely the prison?"

"I hired myself, master, to carry out the bodies of the dead, and I have done that purposely in order to help my brethren and bring them news from the city."

Petronius began to look more attentively at the beautiful face of the boy, his blue eyes and black luxuriant hair, and

then asked:

"From what country art thou; my boy?"

"I am a Galilean, master."

"Wouldst thou likp that Lygia should be free?"

He raised his eyes upwards:

".Even were I to die afterwards."

Suddenly Vinicius, ceasing to pray, said:

"Tell the watchmen to put her into a coffin as dead. Thou find assistants who will carry her out at night together with thee. Near the "Stinking Pits" you will find men waiting with a litter to whom you will give the coffin. Promise the watchmen from me that I will give them as much gold as each one can carry in his cloak."

And speaking thus, his face had lost its usual paleness, the soldier awakened in him, to whom hope had restored his former energy.

Nazarius blushed from joy, and raising his hands he

cried

"May Christ'heal her, for she will be free."

"Dost thou think that the watchmen will consent?" asked Petronius.

They, master? If they know that no punishment and

torture meet them for this!"

"So it is," said Vinicius. "The watchmen wanted even to consent to her flight,, so all the more will they help to

carry her out as dead.'

"True, there is a man," said Nazarius, "who tries with a red hot iron whether the bodies which we carry out are dead. But this one takes a few sestertia for not touching the faces of the dead with the iron. For one aureus he will touch the coffin—not the flesh."

"Tell him that he will get a purse full of aurei," said Petronius, "But wilt thou be able to find reliable assist-

ants?" -

" 'I shall be able to find such ones who, for money, would sell their own wives and children."

"Where will thou find them?"

"In the prison itself, or in the city. The watchmen, once paid, will let in anybody I like."

."Then thou wilt introduce me as a hired man," said

Vinicius.

But Petronius with all positiveness began to dissuade him from this. The pretorians could recognize him even in the disguise, and then all would be lost. I 'Neither in the prison nor at the Stinking Pits,'" he said. "It is necessary that all, including Cæsar and Tygellinus, were convinced that she died, for otherwise they would order pursuit immediately. The suspicious we can deceive only by this, that while she will be taken out to the Albanian mountains or farther, to Sicily, we shall remain in Rome. In a week or two only thou wilt become sick and wilt summon the physician of Nero, who will order thee to go to the mountains. Then you will unite, and afterwards..."

Here he thought for a while, and then, waiving his hand,

he said:

"Afterwards, other times, perhaps, will come."
"May Christ take pity on her," said Vinicius, "for **thou** 

speakest of Sicily while she is sick and may die. "....

"Meanwhile, we will locate her hearer. The air itself will cure her if we shall only liberate her' from the prison. Post thou not have in the mountains any tenant upon whom thou couldst rely?"

"Yes! I have! Yes!" answered Vinicius, hastily. "Near Coriola there is a reliable man in the mountains who used to carry me in his arms when I was a child and who loves me

vet."

Petronius handed the tablets to him.

"Write to him that he should come here to-morrow. shall send the courier immediately."

Saying this he called the overseer of the atrium and gave

him corresponding orders.

In a few moments later a mounted slave set out to Coriola for the night.

"I would like," said Vinicius, "thatUrsus should accom-

pany her on the way. I would be quieter."

"Master," said Nazarius-"he is a man of superhuman strength, who will break the grating and follow her. There is a window above a precipitous high wall, under which no guard stands. I will bring a rope to Ursus and he will do the rest himself."

"By Hercules!" said Petronius, "let him escape as he pleases, but not together with her, nor not till two or three days afterward, for they would follow him and discover her refuge. By Hercules! Do you wish to ruin yourselves and her? I forbid you to mention Coriola to him, or I will wash my hands of the whole affair."

Both of them recognized the reasonableness of his re-remark and became silent. Then Nazarius began to take leave, promising to come the next morning at daybreak.

He hoped to come to an agreement with the watchmen tonight, but first he wanted to see his mother, who by reason of the uncertain and terrible times had not a moment of rest concerning him. After a reflection he decided not to look for an assistant in the city, but to find and bribe one from among those who carried out the corpses from the prison.

Just before leaving, however, he stopped, and taking Vini-

cius aside he began to whisper to him.

"Master, I will not mention our intention to anybody, not, even to my mother, but Peter the Apostle promised to come to us from the amphitheater and to him I will tell everything." -

"Thou canst speak loudly in this house," answered Vinicius. " Peter the Apostle was in the amphitheater with the men of Petronius. Besides I will go with thee myself."

And he ordered a slave's cloak to be brought to him, after

which they went out.

Petronius breathed deeply.

"I desired," he thought, "that she should die of this fever, for to Vinicius this would be the least terrible. But now I am willing to offer a golden tripod to Esculapius in return for her recovery. Ah! thou, Ahenobarbus, desirest to make for thyself a spectacle out of the suffering of a lover! Thou, Augusta, first hast envied the girls' beauty, and nowwouldst devour her, because thyRuflus has perished. Thou, Tygellinus, wouldst ruin her out of spite against myself! We shall see. I tell you that your eyes will not see her upon the arena, for either she will die her own death or I shall take her from you as from the jaws of dogs.... And I shall take her so that you shall not be aware of it, and afterward, as often as I shall look upon you I shall think so many times: Behold the fools, whom Petronius has deceived."

And satisfied with himself, he passed to the triclinium, where with Eunice he sat down for supper. A lector read to them the idyls of Theocritus. Outside, the wind chased by clouds from the direction of Soracte, and a sudden storm stirred the calmness of a serene summer's night. From time to time thunders sounded npon the seven hills, but they, lying side by side at the table, listened to the idyllic poet, who in singing Doric dialect celebrated the love of the shepherds, and later, pacified, they prepared for sweet rest.

Before Vinicius entered, however, Petronius, learning of

his return, came to him and asked:

"And what? Have you determined something new? And did Nazarius go already to the prison?"

"Yes," answered the young man, separating his hair wet from the rain. "Nazarius went to settle with the watchmen, and I saw Peter, who ordered me to pray and believe."

'That is well. If everything succeeds, she can be carried

out to-morrow night."

"The tenant with men has to be there at daybreak."

"That is a short road. Rest now."

But-Vinicius kneeled in his cubiculum and began to pray.

With the sunrise the tenant, Niger, arrived from Coriola, bringing along, in accord with Vinicius' orders, mules, a litter and four trusty men, chosen from among British slaves, whom, however, he had providently left in an inn at Subura.

Vinicius, who watched all night, came to meet him, and the latter, who was moved at the sight of the young master,

kissed his hands and eyes and said:

"Dear, art thou sick, or have sorrows sucked the blood from thy face, for hardly could I recognize thee at the first

glance?"

Vinicius took him to the interior colonnade, called, "xistes" and there admitted him to the secret. Niger was listening with contracted attention and upon his healthy, sunburnt face was noticeable great excitement, which he did not even try to master.

"So she is a Christian?" he cried.

And he began to look inquiringly into Vinicius' face, and the latter evidently guessed what the look of the peasant meant, for he answered:

"I also am a Christian." .. ..

Then in the eyes of Niger tears glittered; for a while he was silent, then, raising up his hands, he said:

"Oh, thanks to thee, Christ, that Thou hast taken

the cataract from eyes most dear in this world to me."

After which he embraced Vinicius, and crying from happiness began to kiss his forehead.

Later came Petronius bringing Nazarius with him.

"Good news I" he said from a distance.

In fact the news was good. First the physician Glaucus guaranteed Lygia's life, although she had the same prison-fever, of which in Tullianum and in other prisons hundreds of men were dying every day. In regard to the watchmen and the man who tried the dead with a red-hot iron there was not the least difficulty. An assistant, Attis, was also hired.

"We made openings in the coffin," said Nazarius, "so that the sick girl should be able to breathe. The only danger is if she should groan or speak when we pass by the pretorians. But she is very weak, and since morning she lies with closed eyes. Besides, Glacus will give her a som-

niferous beverage, which he will prepare himself from the medicines brought by me from the city. The lid of the coffin will not be nailed fast. You will raise it easily and take the sick Lygia to the litter, while we shall put an oblong bag of sand into the coffin, which you will have ready."

Vinicius, while listening to these words, was as pale as linen, but he listened with such a strained attention that he seemed to guess beforehand what Nazarius was going to say.

"Will any other bodies be carried out of the prison?"

asked Petronius.

"Last night about twenty people died, and before evening some fifteen more will die," answered the boy; "we will have to go together with the whole train, but we will linger behind. On the first turn my companion will become lamé purposely. In this way we will remain considerably behind the others. You shall wait for us near the small temple of Libitina. May God give the darkest possible night."

"God will give," said Niger. "Yesterday there was a clear evening, and later a storm arose. To-day the sky is clear again, but it has been sultry since morning. There will

be rains and storms every night."

"Do you go without any lights?" asked Vmicius.

"The torches are carried only in front. You, in any event, be near the Libitina's temple as soon as it will be dark, though usually we cany out the corpses just before midnight only."

They were silent, only the quickened breathing of Vini-

cius was heard. Petronius turned toward him:

"I said yesterday," he remarked, "that it would be best if we both stay at home. Now, however, I see that even I myself shall not be able to stay at home.... Besides, were this a flight one would have to observe more caution, but as they will carry her out as if dead it seems to me that not the least suspicion will pass through anybody's head."

"Yes! yes!" answered Vinicius—"I must be there. I

shall take her out of the coffin myself."....

"Once in my house under Coriola I will answer for her,"

said Niger.

With this ended the conversation. Niger went to the inn to meet his men. Nazarius, taking a purse of gold under his tunic, returned to the prison. For Vinicius a day full of uneasiness, fever, fear and expectation began.

"The plan ought to succeed for it is well devised," said Petronius to him. 'It was impossible to arrange things any better. Thou hast to look distressed and wear a dark toga. But do not leave the circuses, however. Let them see thee.... Everything is so planned that there cannot be a failure. But art thou perfectly sure of thy tenant?"

<sup>11</sup> He is a Christian," answered Vinicius.

Petronius looked with astonishment at him, then he began

to shrug his shoulders and to speak as if to himself:

"By Pollux! How it spreads! And, how it clings to human souls!.... Under such a creed people would at once renounce all the Roman, Greek and Egyptian gods. This, however is wonderful.... By Pollux!.... If I believed that anything depended on our gods I would now promise to each one six white bulls, and twelve to the Capitolian Jupiter.... But thou also spare no promises to thy Christ...."

' 'I gave him my soul," answered Vinicius.

And they separated. Petronius returned to the cubiculum. Vinicius went to observe the prison from a distance, and thence he went to the slope of the Vatican hill, to that cottage of the digger in which he received the baptism from the Apostle. It seemed to him that inthe cottage Christ will hear him more quicker than anywhere else, so finding it and throwing himself upon the earth, he exerted all the strength of his suffering soul in a prayer for mercy, and forgot himself, so that he did not remember where he was nor what was happening with him.

Only in the afternoon he was awakened by the sound of trumpets coming from the Circus of Nero. Then he went out from the cottage and began to look around as if just aroused from a sleep. It was hot outside and there was a quietude at times, broken only by the sound of the trumpets, and continually by the obstinate hissing of the grasshoppers. The air became sultry; the sky above the city was still blue, but in the direction of the Sabinian mountains

dark clouds gathered low at the edge of the horizon.

Vinicius returned home. Petronius waited for him in the

atrium.

<sup>1</sup> \* I was at the Palatine, "he said. <sup>1</sup> ' I showed myself there purposely, and I even sat down to the dice. There will be a feast to-night at Anicius; I promised that we shall come—but after midnight only, for before, I have to sleep.

Tn fact I shall go there, and it would be well if thou wert there also."

"Was there no news from Niger or from Nazarius?"

asked Vinieius.

"No. We shall see them only at midnight. Didst thou notice that a storm is coming?"

"Yes."

"To-morrow there shall be a spectacle of crucified Christians, but perhaps the rain might prevent it."

Saying this he approached, and touching the arm- of Vin-

'icius, he said:

1 ' Thou wilt not see her upon a cross, but in Coriola. By Castor! I would not give the moment when we shall liberate her for all the gems in Rome. The evening is near...."

Indeed the evening was nearing, and a darkness began to cover the city earlier than usual by reason of the clouds, which covered the entire horizon. With the coming of the evening an abundant rain fell, which, steaming upon the stones warmed by the heat, filled the streets of the city with a mist. Then alternately it was calm and then short showers would fall.

"Let us hurry," Vinieius finally said; "by reason of the storm they might carry out the bodies from the prison earlier."

"It is time," answered Petronius.

And taking Gallic cloaks with hoods, they went out through the garden door upon the street. Petronius armed himself with a short Roman knife called a sica, which he took always on his nightly excursions.

The streets were vacated by reason of the storm. Prom time to time lightning tore the clouds, lighting with its dazzing gleam the fresh walls of houses newly built or being built, and the wet stone slabs with which the streets were being paved. By such light they finally saw the hill upon

which stood the small temple of Libitina, and at the bottom of the hill a group of mules and horses.

"Niger!" called Vinieius, in a low voice.

"Here I am, master!" was heard a voice in the midst of the rain.

"Is everything ready?"

"So it is, dear master. As soon as it became dark, we

were on the spot. But shelter yourself under the wall for you will be drenched. What a storm! I think that hail will fall!"

In fact the fear of Niger proved true, for soon hail began to fall, at first small, then larger and thicker. The air cooled itself instantly.

Standing under the wall, sheltered from the wind and the

icy missiles, they conversed in lowered voices.

"Even should somebody see us," spoke Niger, "he will have no suspicions, for we look like men who wait for the storm to pass. But I fear lest they should defer the carrying out of the bodies till, to-morrow."

'< The hail will not last long," said Petronius. <1 We must

wait even till daj<sup>T</sup>break."

And so they waited, listening for the sound of the procession to reach them. The hail passed, but immediately afterward a shower began to bluster. At times the wind was raising and earned from the direction of the "Stinking Pits", a terrible odor of decomposing bodies, which were buried shallow and carelessly.

Suddenly Niger said:

"I see a light—one, two, three—those are torches!"

And he turne'd to the men:

"Take care that the mules should not snort!"

"They are coming," said Petronius.

Indeed, the lights were becoming more and more visible. In a while it was possible to distinuish the flames of the

torches waving from the breeze.

Niger began to cross himself and pray. Meanwhile the dismal procession drew nearer, and finally, coming up to the temple of Libitina, it stopped. Petronius, Vinicius and Niger pressed close to the wall, not understanding what that meant. But they halted only to wind rags around their faces and mouths on account of the choking odor, which, close to the "Stinking Pits," was simply unendurable, after which they raised the biers and continued on their way.

Only one coffin stopped before the small temple.

Vinicius sprang towards it, and behind him Petronius, Niger and two, British slaves with a litter.

But before they reached it the voice of Nazarius full of pain was heard in the darkness:

"Master, they took her, together with Ursus, to the

Esquiline prison. We are carrying adother body, and she was carried away before midnight.

Petronius, returning home, was as gloomy as a storm and did not even try to console Vinicius. He understood that the freeing of Lygia from the Esquilinian undergrounds, could not even be thought of. He guessed that probably they removed her from the Tullianum in order that she should not die of fever and eseape the amphitheater intended for her. But this very thing was an evidence that she was watched and guarded more carefully than others. Petronius from the depth of his soul pitied her and Vinicius, but besides this the thought was tormenting him that for the first time in his life something failed him, and that for the first time he was conquered in a struggle.

'1 The fortune seems to desert me," he spoke to himself, "but the gods are mistaken if they think that I will agree to

such a life as his, for instance."

Here he looked at Vinicius, who was also looking at him with strained eyes.

"What is the matter with thee? Thou hast fever?" said

Petronius.

But Vinicius answered with a certain strange, broken and slow voice, like that of a sick child:

" And I believe that he can give her back to me."

# The last thunders of the storm were ceasing

## CHAPTER XV.

A rain lasting three days, an exceptional phenomenon in-Rome during summer, and hail falling in opposition to the natural order, not only in the daytime and evenings, but even at night, interrupted the spectacles. The people began to fear. A scarcity of grapes was predicted, and when on a certain noontime a thunderbolt melted the bronze statue of Ceres, sacrifices were ordered in the temple of Jupiter Salvator. The priests of Ceres spread news that the wrath of the gods turned upon the city because of the negligent execution of punishment of the Christians, therefore the people began to demand that, regardless of the weather, the

continuation of the spectacles should be hastened, and happiness possessed the whole of Rome when it was announced at last that, after three days of interruption the 'ludus'

will begin anew.

Meantime beautiful weather returned. The amphitheater was filled with thousands of people before daybreak, and Casar with the vestals and his court arrived early. The spectacle was to begin with a combat of Christians among themselves, for which they were dressed as gladiators and were given every kind of weapons which served the gladiators by profession for the offensive and defensive combat. But here a disappointment took place. The Christians threw the nets, forks, lances and swords upon the sand and began to embrace one another and to encourage mutually in the perseverance in face of the tortures and death. At this a •deep offense and indignation seized the hearts of the mob. Some reproached them with timorousness and cowardice, others maintained that they do not wish to fight through hatred of the people and in order to deprive them of the joy which the sight of gallantry produces. At last, by order of Caesar real gladiators were let out, who killed the kneeling and defenseless Christians.

But, after the removal of the corpses, the spectacle ceased to be a battle and changed to a series of mythologic pictures invented by Caesar himself. So they saw Hercules burning in live fire upon the mountain Oeta. Vinicius shuddered at the thought that perhaps Ui'sus was intended for the part of Hercules, but evidently the turn of the faithful servant of Lygia had not yet arrived, for some other, quite unknown to Vinicius, burned upon the pile. But in the following picture Chilo, whom Caesar did not want to free from his presence at the spectacle, saw many of his acquaintances. The death of Deedalus and Icarus was presented. As Daedalus appeared Eurycius, the same old men who gave a sign of a fish to Chilo, and as Icarus figured his son, Quartus. Both were raised up by means of a special machine, and then they were hurled down from an immense height upon the arena, young Quartus falling so near to the emperor's podium that lie spattered with blood not only the outside ornaments but also the prop covered with purple cloth. Chilo did not see the fall, for he closed his eyes, but lie heard the dull strike of the body, and when in a while he noticed blood close to him he nearly fainted a second time. But the pictures changed quickly. Shameful tortures of virgins, performed before death by the gladiators, disguised as beasts, gladdened the hearts of the mob. They saw priestesses of Cybele and Ceres, Danaidae, they saw Dirce and Pasifae, and finally young girls rent apart by wild horses. The people applauded the continually new thoughts of Caesar, who, proud of them and made happy by the applause, did not take the emerald from his eye, observing the white bodies torn by iron and the convulsive quiverings of the victims. There were, however, pictures from the history of the city also. After the virgins they saw Mucius Sceevola, whose hand, fastened to a tripod over a fire, filled the arena with the odor of burnt flesh, but who, like the true Scaavola, never uttered a groan, with his eyes raised upwards and a whisper of the prayer upon his blackened lips. After he was killed and dragged out to the spoliarium, the usual midday interruption in the spectacle followed. Caesar, together with the vestals and the Augustians, left the amphitheater and went to a purposely erected purple tent, in which there was prepared a magnificent prandium for him and for his guests. The throngs for the larger part followed his example, and going out they placed themselves in picturesque groups near the tent to give rest to the limbs wearied by the long sitting, and to consume the food which, by the favor of Caesar, was abundantly carried around by slaves. The most curious only, leaving their seats, descended upon the very arena, and touching with their fingers the sand yet sticky from blood, they conversed as connoisseurs and amateurs about what happened and what was yet to follow. But soon even they went away, so that they should not come too late to the feast; only a few remained, who were arrested not by curiosity but by compassion for the future victims. '

Those concealed themselves in the passages or in the lower seats, and meanwhile the arena was levelled and pits were dug out in it, one close to another, in rows through the whole circle, from edge to edge, so that their last row was situated about fifteen steps from the emperor's podium. From outside the Circus there came the noise of the people, shouts and applause, and here with a feverish haste preparations for some new tortures were made. Suddenly the

-curricula opened, and from all the openings leading upon the arena they began to drive out crowds of Christians,

naked and carrying crosses upon their shoulders.

The whole amphitheater swarmed with them. Old men were running, bowed under the weight of the wooden beams; by their sides men in the prime of life, women with loose hair under which they tried to hide their nakedness; boys not grown up, and little children. The crosses in the greater part, as well as the victims, were wreathed with flowers. The Circus servants, flogging the unfortunates with whips, forced them to place the crosses by the prepared pits and stand in a row near them. In this way were to perish those whom they did not have time to throw to the dogs and wild beasts on the first day of the spectacles. Now they were seized by black slaves, and laying the victims upon their backs on the wood they began to nail their hands to the cross-beams, diligently and hurriedly, so that the .people, returning after the interruption, should find all the crosses already erected. The noise of hammers sounded in the whole amphitheater, and their echoes, spreading over the upper rows, reached the space surrounding the amphitheater and the tent in which Caesar entertained the vestals and his companions. They drank wine there, made fun of Chilo and whispered strange words in the ears of the priestesses of Vesta, while work, was going on upon the arena, nails were -driven into hands and feet of the Christians, the shovels buzzed, filling the pits in which were placed the crosses with earth.

But among the victims whose turn should come in a while, was Crispus. The lions did not have time to tear him, so a cross was destined for him, while he, always ready for death, was happy with the thought that his hour was coming. He was looking differently to-day, for his emaciated body was entirely naked save a girdle of ivy which surrounded his loins, and on his head was a wreath of roses. But the same everlasting energy gleamed in his eyes, and the same austere and fanatical face was looking out from under the wreath. His heart was not changed either, for, as once in the cuniculum he threatened his brethren sewed up in skins with God's anger, so to-day he was reproving them instead of consoling.

"Thank the Saviour," he said, "that He permits you to-

day the same death as He died Himself. Perhaps a part of your sins will be forgiven for this; tremble, however, for justice must be fulfilled, and there can not be a similar reward to the wicked and the good ones."

And his words were accompanied by the sound of hammers with which the hands and feet of the victims were nailed. More and more crosses were erected upon the arena, but he, turning to the crowd of those who were yet standing,

each one at his beam, continued:

"I see the open sky, but I see also an open abyss... I don't know myself what account I will give to the Lord of my life, though I believed and hated evil, and it is not the death that I fear, but the resurrection; not the torture, but the judgment, for the day of anger is coming."

But suddenly from amongst the nearest rows some voice

calm and solemn was heard.

"Not the day of anger, but the day of mercy—day of salvation and happiness; for I tell you that Christ will welcome you, will console you and seat you at His right hand. Confide, for behold the heaven opens before you."

At these words all eyes turned toward the benches; even those who were hanging upon crosses already, raised their

pale, tortured heads and began to look in that direction.

And he approached the very barrier surrounding the

arena, and began to bless them with the sign of a cross.

Crispus extended his arm toward him as if wishing to rebuke him, but seeing his face he dropped his hand, the knees bent under him while his lips whispered:

1! The Apostle Paul! "

To the great astonishment of the circus-servants all who were not yet nailed fast kneeled down, while Paul of Tarsus

turned towards Crispus and said:

< 'Crispus, do not threaten them, for to-day they will be in paradise together with thee. Thou thinkest that they can be condemned? But who shall condemn them? Will God do it, who gave His Son for them? Will Christ do it, who died for their salvation like they are dying for His name? And how can He who loves,condemn? Who will accuse the God's chosen? Who will say of this blood: 'Accursed I'"</p>

"Master, I hated.evil," answered the old priest.

"Christ commanded to love men more even than to hate evil, for his teaching is love, not hatred."

"I have sinned in the hour of death," answered Crispus. And he began to strike his breast.

Suddenly the manager of the benches approached the Apostle and asked:

"Who art thou, who speakest to the condemned?"

"A Roman citizen," answered Paul camly.

Then, turning towards Crispus, he said:

<sup>1</sup> 'Confide, for this is a day of grace, and die in peace, servant of God!"

Two negroes approached Crispus at that moment to lay him upon the beam, but he looked around once more and cried:

"Brethren of mine, pray for me!"

And his face lost its usual severeness; his stony features assumed an expression of calmness and sweetness. He extended his arms along the cross-beams himself, in order to facilitate the work, and, looking straight into heaven, he began to pray fervently. He seemed not to feel anything, for as the nails entered his hands not the least quivering shook his body, neither was there a wrinkle of pain upon his face; he prayed as they -were nailing on his legs; he prayed when they raised the cross and trampled the earth around the cross. Only when the throngs with laughter and shouts began to fill the amphitheater the brows of the old man contracted a little, as if he was angry that the pagan people are disturbing his quietude and the peacefulness of a sweet death.

But previously all the crosses were raised, so that there stood as if a forest with people hanging upon the trees. The sunshine was falling upon the heads and shoulders of the martyrs, while, thick shadows were falling on the arena, which formed a black intertwined grating, through which the yellow sand was seen. This was a spectacle in which the whole delight for the people was the observing of the slow dying. But never yet was there seen such a thicket of crosses. The arena was studded with them so closely that the sevants could squeeze between them only with difficulty. Mostly women were hanging on the edge, but Crispus, as a leader, was placed close to the emperors' podium, upon a gigantic cross, wreathed at the bottom with woodbine. None of the victims yet died, but some of those who were nailed up first, had fainted. None groaned nor

Bailed for mercy. Some were hanging with their heads-inclining to their shoulders or drooping to their breasts, as if seized by sleep; some as if in a meditation; some looking toward the heavens, moved their lips quietly. In this terrible forest of crosses, in these stretched bodies, in the silence of the victims, there was, however, something ominous. The people, who after the feast, full and merry, entered the Circus with shouts, grew silent, not knowing upon which body to fix their eyes and to think. The nakedness, the stretched womanly bodies ceased to excite their senses. They did not make even bets as to who would die first, which were usually made when there appeared a number of condemned on the arena. It seemed that Cajsar was also bored, for, turning his head, he was arranging with a lazy movement his necklace, his face drowsy and sleepy.

Suddenly Crispus, hanging opposite, who awhile ago had his eyes closed as if he had fainted or was dying, opened

them and began to look at Caesar.

His face assumed such an inexorable expression and his eyes gleamed with such a fire that the Aughstians began to whisper among themselves, pointing with their fingers athim, and finally Caesar himself turned his attention upon him and placed the emerald to his eye.

A complete silence followed. The eyes of the spectatorswere fixed upon Crispus, who tried to move his right hand

as if he wished to tear it from the wood.

In a while his breast swelled, his ribs came out plainly, and he began to shout:

1 'Matricide!—Woe to thee! I'

The Augustians, hearing the mortal insult thrown upon the ruler of the world in presence of crowds of thousands, did not dare to breathe. Chilo had almost fainted. Caesar quivered and dropped the emerald from his fingers.

The people also held their breath. The voice of Crispus, sounded mightier and mightier in the whole amphitheater:

"Woe to thee, murderer of wife and brother, woe to thee, Anti-Christ! An abyss opens before thee, death extends hands to thee, and the grave waits for thee. Woe to thee, living corpse, for thou wilt die in horror and wilt be condemned forever!"...

And not being able to tear his nailed hand from the beam, stretched frightfully, looking like a skeleton during life,

inexorable like Destiny, he shook his white beard over the podium of Nero, scattering at the same time by the motion of his head the rose-leaves of the wreath placed upon his skull.

"Woe to thee, murderer! Thy measure is exceeded and

thy time is nearing!!"....

Here he strained himstlf once more; for a while it seemed that he would tear his hand from the cross and stretch it threateningly toward Caesar, but suddenly his emaciated arms elongated, his body hung down, his head dropped to his breast, and he died.

In the forest of crosses the weaker ones also began to fall into an eternal sleep.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

"Sire," said Chilo, "the sea at present is like olive oil, and the waves seem to sleep.... Let us go to Achaea. There the fame of Apollo awaits thee, there wreaths and triumphs wait for thee; there people will worship thee, and the gods will receive thee as a guest equal to themselves—while here, sire"......

And he paused, for his lower lip began to tremble so for-

cibly that his words passed into unintelligible sounds.

"We shall go after the spectacles will be finished," answered Nero. "I am aware that even now some call the Christians "innoxia corpora." Were I to go, all would

repeat this. What dost thou fear, thou cur?"

Saying this he contracted his brows and began to look inquiringly at Chilo, as if waiting for an explanation from him, for he was feigning only cool blood. At the last spectacle he was seized with fear himself at the words of Crispus, and even when he returned home he could not sleep from rage and shame, and also from fear.

Suddenly the superstitious Vestinus, who was listening to their conversation, looked around and said in a mysterious

voice:

"Listen, sire, to this old man; in those Christians there is something unnatural. Their divinity gives them an easy death, but it might be revengeful." To this Nero answered hastily:

<sup>1</sup> 'It is not I who arrange the spectacles. It is Tygellinus. '\*

"So it is! It was I," answered Tygellinus, -who heard Cmsar's answer, "It is I, and I jeer at all Christian gods. Vestinus, sire, is a bladder, blown up by prejudices, while this valiant Greek is ready to die from fear, seeing a hen bristled up in defense of her chicken."

'That is well," said Nero, 'but from now on order to cut

off tongues of the Christians, or gag their mouths."

"Woe to me," moaned Chilo.

But to Caesar, to whom the audacious self-confidence of Tygellinus gave courage, began to laugh, and pointing at the >)ld Greek, said:

"Behold how a descendant of Achilles looks!"

Indeed Chilo was looking terrible. The remains of his Lair whitened on his skull, while in his face was an expression of some immense uneasiness, fear and a general breaking down. At times, too, he seemed as stupefied and half-couscious. Often he did not answer questions, while at times he was falling in anger and was impertinent,, so that the Augustians preferred not to tackle him.

Such a moment now came upon him.

"Do with me what you please, but I shall not go any more to the spectacles!" he cried desperately, snapping his fingers.

Nero looked at him for a moment, and turning to Tygelli-

nus, he said:

'Thou wilt see that this stoic should be near me in the gardens. I wish to observe what impression our torches will produce upon him."

Chilo, however, was seized with fear at the threat quiver-

ing in Caesar's voice.

"Sire," he said, "I shall not see anything, for I cannot see at night."

But Caesar answered with a terrible laugh:

'The night will be as bright as a day.'

Then he turned towards the other Augustians, with whom he began to converse about the races, which he intended to arrange at the end of the spectacles.

Petronius approached Chilo, and touching his shoulder he

said:

"Did not I tell thee? Thou wilt not hold out."

Chilo answered then:

"I want to intoxicate myself."

And he extended his trembling hand toward a cup of wine, but he could not carry it to his mouth, seeing which Vstinus took the vessel from him and coming up close he asked with a curious and terrified face:

"Do the furies persecute thee?"

The old man looked at him for some time with open mouth, as if he did not hear the question, and began- to wink his eyes.

Vestinus repeated:

"Do the furies pursue thee?"

"No," answered Chilo, "but night is before me."

"How, night? May the gods take pity on thee! How,

night?"

"Night terrible and impenetrable, in "'which something moves and something comes up to me. But I don't know what it is and I fear."

'I was always positive that they are sorcerers. Dost thou

not dream anything?"

"No. because I don't fall asleep. I did not think that they will punish them thus."

"Dost thou pity them?"

"Why do you shed so much blood? Didst thou hear what that one. spoke from the cross? Woe to us!"

"I have heard," answered Vestinus in a low voice. "But

they are incendiaries."

"It is not true!"

"And enemies of the human race."

"It is not true!"

<sup>1</sup> 'And poisoners of waters.''

"It is not true!"

"And murderers of children."

"It is not true!"

"How?" asked Vestinus with astonishment. "Thou hast said so thyself, and hast given them into the hands of Tygel-ilnus."

"And therefore night surrounded me and death comestoward me.' At times it seems to me that I died already, and you too."

"No! they are the ones who will die, and we axe living...

But tell me, what do they see when dying?"

"Christ."

"That is their God? Is He a mighty God?"

But Chilo answered with a question also:

"What torches are to burn in the gardens?

"Didst thou hear what Caesar said?"

"I heard and I know. Those are called 'sarmentitii' and 'semaxii.' They will dress them in painful tunics saturated with resin; tie them to the posts and set fire to them.... If only their God would not send some disasters upon the city. 'Semaxii!' it is a terrible punishment."

<¹1 prefer this, for there will be no blood, "answered Chilo. 'Order a slave to place the cup to my lips. I wish to drink but I spill the wine, for my hand shakes from

old age."

Others meanwhile conversed of the Christians.

The old Domitius Afer scoffed at them.

"There is such a multitude of them," he said, " that they could raise a civil war; and, you remember, there were fears whether they would not want to defend themselves. But they die like sheep."

"Let them try to do otherwise," said Tygellinus.

To this Petronius said:

"You are mistaken. They defend themselves."

"In what way?"

"With patience."

"This is a new method."

• "Certainly. But are you able to say that they died as common criminals? No! They are dying as if not they,but those who condemn them to death—that is, we and the whole Roman people were the criminals."

"What absurdity!" cried Tygellinus.

"Behold the most stupid of the stupid," answered Petronius.

But others, struck by the justice of his remarks, began to look at each other with astonishment and repeat:

"True! there is something strange and singular in their

death."

"I tell you that they see their divinity!" cried Vestinus from aside.

Then a few Augustians turned towards Chilo. '1 Hei, old man, thou knowest them well; tell us, what do they see?"

But the Greek spat out the wine upon his tunic and answered:

"Resurrection."

And he began to tremble so that the guests sitting nearest bursted into loud laughter.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Eor some time Vinicius passed the nights away from homev It came to Petronius' mind that perhaps he had arranged some new plan and was working for the liberation of Lygia from the Esquilinian prison, but he did not wish to question him, lest he should bring ill luck upon the work; This exquisite sceptical man became to a certain degree supertitious, or rather since the time that he failed to liberate Lygia from the Mamertinian underground, he ceased to confide in his own star.

Besides, even now he did not count upon a good result of Vinicius' efforts. The Esquilinian prison, formed hastily from the cellars of the houses which were destroyed in order to put a stop to the fire, was not so terrible as the old Tullianum near the Capitol, but it was a hundred times more carefully watched. Petronius understood perfectly that they transferred Lygia there only for the reason that she should not die and escape the amphitheater, so he easily guessed/ that for this very same reason they were guarding her with the greatest care.

"Evidently," he said to himself, "Csesar and Tygellinusintended her for some singular spectacle more terrible than all others, and Vinicius is more likely to perish himself than

to rescue here."

But even Vinicius had lost hope that he would be able to rescue her. At present only Christ could do it. The young tribune desired to see her in the prison.

Since the time that Nazarius entered the Mamertinian prison as a hired man for the carrying out of corpses Vinicius had hopes, so he decided to try this means himself.

Bribed with an immense amount, the overseer of the Stinking Pits "finally accepted him among the men whom he was sending every night to the prison after corpses. The.

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«chance that Vinicius might be recognized was very small indeed. Night, the slaves' dress and the poor illumination of the prison guarded against this. Besides, who could imagine that a patrician, a grandson and a son of consuls, could find himself among the grave diggers' men, exposed to the exhalations of the prisons and the "Stinking Pits," and that he accepted a work to which people were forced only by slavery or the utmost poverty.

But he, when the desired evening came, happily wound a rag saturated with turpentine around his loins and his head, and with throbbing heart he went among others to the

Esquiline.

The pretorian guards did not make objection for all were provided with proper tessene, which the centurion examined at the light of the lantern. In a while the large iron gate

opened before them and they entered.

Vinicius perceived before him a spacious arched cellar from which there were passages into a row of others. Dim torches lighted the interior, filled with people. Some of them were lying under the walls, sleeping or perhaps dead. Others were surrounding a large vessel with water, standing in the center, from which they drank like men tortured by fever; others were sitting on the earth with their elbows supported on the knees and their heads in their hands; here and there the children were sleeping, clinging to their mothers. Around were now heard the groans and the audible, quickened breathing of the sick, now weeping, whispering of prayers, now songs in an undertone, now the curses of the overseers. In the underground the odor of corpses and crowding prevailed. In the dim depths swarmed dark figures, while nearer, by the flickering flames, were seen pale faces, terrified, emaciated and hungry, with lifeless eyes, or burning with fever, with blue lips, with streams of sweat on their foreheads and with hair stuck together. The ;sick were loudly talking in fever, others were calling for water, others yet, to be led to death. And yet this prison was less terrible than the old Tullianum. Vinicius at this sight staggered and the breath failed him. At the thought that Lygia was in the midst of this poverty and misery his hair rose on his head and a cry of despair died in his breast. The amphitheater, the fangs of the beasts, the crosses—all were better than these terrible undergrounds, full of the

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corpse-odor, in which entreating voices repeated from all-corners:

"Lead us to death!"

Vinicius drove his finger nails into his palms for he felt that he was growing weaker and that conciousness was leaving him. All that he endured till now, the whole love and suffering, changed in him into one desire of death.

Suddenly, close by, was heard the voice of the overseer'

of the "Stinking Pits."

"And how many corpses do you have to-day?"

"There will be a dozen," answered the prison guard, "but before morning there will he more, for there under the walls some are now dying." And he began to complain of women, that they conceal the dead children In order to keep them. longer and not to give them up. to the "Stinking Pits." One had to discover the corpses by their odor, from which theair, already horrible as it was, was pouted still more. "I would prefer, " he said, "to be a slave in a rural ergastulum than to watch those dogs rotting alive. " The overseer of the 'Pits' consoled him, saying that his work was not easier. By this time the knowledge of the reality returned to Vinicius, and he began to look around in the underground, in which, however, he sought Lygia in vain with his eyes, thinking at the same time that he might not see her again alive. There were about fifteen cellars, connected with passages freshly dug out, but the grave diggers' men only entered those from which bodies of the dead had to be removed; therefore fear had seized him, that this which had cost him so many pains might serve him for no purpose.

Luckily his patron came to his aid:

'The bodies have to be carried out at once." he said, 'forthe contagion spreads. Otherwise yourselves and the prisoners will die."

"There are ten of us for all the cellars," answered the

watchman, 1 'and we must sleep. ""

"Then I shall leave thee four of my men, who will walk around the cellars at night and see whether anybody died."

"We shall drink to-morrow if thou wilt do this. Let them bring every corpse for examination, for orders came topierce the necks of, the dead ones, and to the "Stinking Pits" with them at once!"

"That is well, but we shall drink!" said the overseer.

Then he picked out four men, Vinicius among them, while with the remaining ones he began to place the corpses upon biers.

Vinicius felt better. Now he was certain at least that he

would find Lygia.

And he began to examine the first underground. Hf, looked into all the dark corners, to which even the gleam of the torch was not reaching, examined the figures sleeping under the walls, under the cover of rags, and he examined the dangerously sick who were dragged into a separate corner. He could not however, find Lygia anywhere. In the second and third cellars his researches were also fruitless.

Meanwhile the hour became late; the corpses were carried out. The watchmen, lying down in the passages connecting the cellars, fell asleep; the children, tired from weeping were quiet; in the undergrounds was heard oijly the breathing of wearied breasts, and whisperings of prayers here and there.

Vinicius entered the fourth cellar, considerably smaller, and raising up the light, he began to look through it. And he trembled suddenly, for it seemed to him that he sees the gigantic figure of Ursus under the grated opening in the wall. Therefore, blowing out the light instantly, he approached him and asked:

"Ursus, is that thou?"

The giant turned his head.

"Who art thou?"

down near her.

"Dost thou not recognize me?" asked the young man.

"Thou hast blown out the light, how can I recognize thee?" But Vinicius at that moment perceived Lygia, lying on a cloak under the wall, so not speaking further he kneeled

Ursus recognized him and said:

"Griory to Christ, but do not wake her, master!"

Vinicius, kneeling, was looking at her through his tears. Despite the darkness he was able to distinguish her face which seemed to him pale as alabaster, and her thin arms. And at this sight love like a rending pain seized him, shaking his soul to the utmost depths, and at the same time so full of compassion, respect and worshipping, that falling upon his face he began to press the hem of the cloak to his lips, upon which rested this head dearer to him than everything else.

Ursus looked at him silently for a long time; finally however, he pulled him by his tunic.

"Master," he asked, "how didst thou enter and dost thou

come to save her?"

Vinicius arose and for a while he struggled with the emotion.

"Show me a way!" he said.

"I thought thou wilt find its master; only one came to my head."

Here he turned his eyes toward the grated opening, and then, as if answering to himself, he said: "Yes! But the soldiers are there."

"A hundred pretorians," answered Vinicius.

"Then—we shall not pass!"

"No!"

The Lygian rubbed his forehead with his hand and asked again:

"How didst thou enter?"

'I have a tessera from the overseer of the 'Stinking Pits." And suddenly he stopped as if some thought flashed in hishead.

"By the torture of the Saviour!" he began to speak hur-, riedly. 'I will remain here, and let her take my tessera, let her wind up her head with rags, cover her shoulders with a cloak and walk out. Among the grave-digger's slaves thereare a few fellows not grow up, so the pretorians will not recognize her, and when she once reaches the house of Petronius, he will save her!"

But the Lygian dropped his head to his breast and answered: "She would not consent, for she loves thee, and be-sides, she is sick and is not able to stand unassisted."

And after a while he continued:

"If thou, master, and the noble Petronius could not liberate her from the prison, then who is able to save her?"

"Christ alone!"

Then they both were silent. The Lygian in his simple way thought: "He could save everyone, but as He does not save them, evidently the hour of tortures and death has arrived," and he agreed with it concerning himself, but he pitied this child to the depth of his soul, who grew up in his arms and whom he loved more than life.

Vinicius kneeled down again near Lygia. Through the

grated opening moon rays stole into the underground and illuminated it better than the single torch which yet flickered above the door.

Suddenly Lygia opened her eyes, and placing her feverish hands upon the hands of Vinicius, she said:

"I see thee, and I knew that thou wouldst come."

Vinicius dropped down to hei- and began to place her hands to his forehead and his heart, then he raised her a little from her couch and drew her to his breast.

"I have come, my dear," he said; "may Christ guard

and save thee, 0 my beloved Lygia!"

And he could not speak any more, for his heart began to break from suffering and love-, and he did not wish to betray his pain to her.

"I am sick, Marcus," answered Lygia, "and whether upon the arena or here in the prison, I must die. But I prayed that I could see thee before I die and thou hast come. Christ has heard me."

And he was not able to utter a word, but pressed her to his bosom, while she continued:

<sup>1</sup> 'I saw thee through the window in the Tullianum, and I knew that thou hast desired to come. And now the Saviour gave me a moment of consciousness in order that we should be able to take leave of each other. I am going to Him already, Marcus, but I love thee and I shall love thee always."

Vinicius overcame himself, stifled the pain within him and began to speak with a voice which he tried to make

•calm:

"No, dear!" Thou wilt not die. The Apostle commanded to believe and promised to pray for thee, and he had known Christ, Christ has loved him and will not refuse him anything. Wert thou to die, Peter would not order me to confide, and he said to me: 'Confide!' No, Lygia! Christ will take pity on me... He does not want thy death. He will not permit it. I swear to thee by the Saviour's name that Peter is praying for thee."

A silence reigned. The only torch hanging above the door went out, but instead, the moonlight was entering through the opening. In the opposite corner of the cellar a child whined and then was silent. From the outside came the voices of the pretorians, who having finished their

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watcb-time were playing <sup>1</sup> 'script® duodecim'' under the wall. 0 Marcus,"answered Lygia, "Christ himself was calling

O Marcus," 'answered Lygia, "Christ himself was calling to His father: 'Take away from me this cup of bitterness,' and yet He drank it. Christ had died himself upon the cross, and thousands are perishing now for Him, so why should He spare me alone? Who am I then, Marcus? I heard as Peter said, that he too will die tortured; and who am I compared to him? When the pretorians came to us I feared the tortures and the death, but now I don't fear them any more. Look, what a terrible' prison this is; but I am going to heaven. Think only that here is the Caesar, there the Saviour good and merciful. And there is no death. Thou lovest me, then think how happy I shall be. O dear Marcus, think that thou will come there to me."

Here she grew silent through weakness; after a while she raised his hand to her lips:

"Marcus!"

"What, dear?"

' Do not weep after me, and remember that thou wilt come there to me. I have lived for a short time, but God gave me thy soul. So I wish to say to Christ that, although I have died, and though thou hast remained in sorrow, still thou didst not blaspheme against his will and lovest Him always. And wilt thou love Him and wilt thou bear patiently my death?.... For then he will unite us, and I love thee and I wish to be with thee."

Here again breath failed her, and with a barely audible voice she finished:

<" Promise this to me, Marcus!"

Vinicius embraced her with his trembling hands and answered:

"By thy sacred head!—I promise!"

Then, in the sad light of the moon her face brightened up. Once more she raised his hand to her lips and whispered:

"I am thy wife!",

Behind the wall the pretorians, playing the <sup>1</sup> 'script® duodecim," raised a louder quarrel, but these two souls forgot about the prison, about the guards, about the entire earth, and feeling angelic souls within each other, they began to pray.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

For three days' or rather three nights' nothing disturbed their peace. When the usual prison work, consisting of separating the dead from the living and the sick from the healthier ones, was finished, and when the tired watchmen laid down to sleep in the passages, Vinicius entered the underground in which Lygia was, and stayed there till the morning dawn peered through the gratings of the window. She placed her head upon his bosom, and they conversed in low tones of love and of death. Both involuntarily in their thoughts and conversations, even in their desires and hopes, rambled more and more from life and lost its feeling. They were both like people who, sailing on a ship away from the land, do not see the shore any more and slowly sink into an infiniteness. Both were changing gradually into sad spirits, enamoured within each other and in Christ, and ready to fly away. At times in his heart pain was arising like a hurricane, at times hope like a lightning was flashing, formed from love and the confidence in the mercy of the crucified God, but even he each day was tearing himself from the earth more and more, and gave himself up to death. In the morning when he came out of the prison he looked upon the world, upon the city, upon his acquaintances and upon wordly incidents as if through a dream. Everything seemed strange, distant, vain and transitory to him! Even the horror of the tortures ceased to terrifly him, for he had a sensation that this is a thing which may be endured as if in ecstasy, with eyes fixed upon something else. To both it seemed that eternity begins to envelope them already. They conversed of how they will love each other and live together, but solely beyond the grave, and if their thought sometimes turned toward earthly things? it was only like a thought of people who, setting out for a long journey, speak of the preparations for it. Besides, a quietude surrounded them as surrounds two columns standing on some waste country and forgotten. They cared now only for this, that Christ should not separate them; and as each moment strengthened in them this certainty, they became enamored in Him as in the link which was to unite them, as in an endless happiness and quitude. The dust of

the earth was falling from them while yet upon it. The souls in them became as pure as tears. Under the threat of death, in midst of poverty and suffering, upon the prison filth, began a heaven for them, for she took his hand and was leading him toward the eternal spring of life, as if she herself was saved and already sacred.

And Petronius was amazed seeing the face of Vinicius more and more peaceful and a marvelous calmness upon it, which he did not notice formerly. At times even in his mind suppositions were formed that Vinicius found some means of help, and he was grieved that he would not admit him into his hopes.

Finally, not being able to endure it, he said to Vinicius:

'1 Now thou lookest different, so do not make it secret before me, for I wish and am able to help thee: didst thou

plan anything?"

"I did," answered Vinicius, "but thou canst not help me any more. After her death I shall confess that I am a Christian and I shall follow her."

"So thou hast no hope?"

"Yes, on the contrary, I have; Christ will give her back to me and shall not part us any more."

Petronius began to walk around the atrium with an expression of disappointment and impatience in his face; ihen he said:

"We don't need thy Christ for this, for our Thanatos can render thee the same service."

But Vinicius smiled sadly and said:

"No, dear; thou dost not wish to understand this."

'I don't wish, and I cannot," answered Pretonius. I 'There is no time for discussions, but dost thou remember what thou hast said, when we failed to get her out of the Tullianum? I lost all hope, but thou hast said: But I believe that Christ can return her to me.' Let Him return her then to thee. If I throw a precious cup into the sea, none of our gods are able to restore it to me, but if yours is no better, then I don't know why I should worship Him more than the old ones."

"He will give her back to me," answered Vinicius.

Petronius shrugged his shoulders.

" Dost thou know that they will illuminate to-morrow the gardens of Cffisar with Christians?"

"To-morrow?" repeated Vinicius.

And in view of the near, horrible reality his heart quivered with pain and terror. He thought that this might be the last night which he will be able to pass, with Lygia, so, taking leave of Petronius, he betook himself hastily to the "puticuli" for his tessera.

But here a disappointment awaited him, for the overseer

refused to give him the ticket.

"Pardon, master," he said. "I did what I could for thee, but I cannot expose my life. To-night the Christians are to be led to the gardens of Cossar. The prison will be full of soldiers and officials. Wert thou recognized myself

and my children would perish."

Vinicius understood that he would insist in vain. The hope, however, flashed to him that the soldiers who saw him before might perhaps admit him without the ticket, so with the arrival of the night, taking as usual his dirty tunic and winding a rag around his head, he went to the gates of the prison.

But that day the tickets were examined with more carefulness than usual, and moreover the centurion Scevinus, a cruel soldier, devoted with his soul and body to Csesar,

recognized Vinicius.

But evidently in his breast incased in iron there glimmered yet some sparks of pity for human suffering, for, instead of striking the lance against the shield as a sign of, alarm, he took Vinicius aside and said to him:

'I Master, return home. I recognized thee, but I shall be silent, not wishing to ruin thee. I cannot admit thee, but

return home, and may the gods send thee relief."

"Thou canst not admit me," said Vinicius, "but permit me to remain here and see those who will be led out."

"My order does not oppose this," answeredScevinus.

Vinicius stood before the gate and waited till the prisoners would be led out. At last, about midnight the gates of the prison opened wide and whole rows of prisoners appeared, men, women and children, surrounded by detachments of pretonians. The night was very clear and there was a full moon, so that not only the figures but even the faces of the unfortunates could be distinguished. Thej' walked in pairs, in a long, dismal procession, and in midst of silence broken only by the clatter of the soldiers' armors. So many of

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them were led that it seemed that all the cellars would be emptied.

At the end of the procession Vinicius perceived Glaucus the physician, but neither Ursus nor Lygia were among the condemned.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

Evening had not yet arrived when the first waves of people began to flow into Caesar's gardens. The throngs dressed in holiday apparel, with wreaths, joyous and singing and partly intoxicated, were coming to look upon the new spectacle. The shouts: "Semaxii! Sarmentitii!" sounded on the Via Tecta, on the Emilius bridge and on the other side of the Tiber, on the Triumphal road, near the Circus of Nero, and as far as the Vatican hill. People had been seen burnt at the stake, but never yet was there seen such a multitude of condemned. Caesar and Tygellinus wishing to finish with the Christians, and at the same time to check the plague, which spread more and more in the city from the prisons, ordered all the undergrounds to be emptied, so that barely fifty people remained in them intended for the end of the spectacles. Therefore the throngs, having passed the garden gates, grew dumb from astonishment. All the main and side alleys, running among a thicket of trees, around meadows, islets, ponds, lakes and spaces of flowers, were studded with pitch-posts, to which Christians were tied. From the elevated places, where the trees were not obstructing the view, were visible whole rows of posts and bodies dressed with flowers, myrtle leaves and ivy, extending into the depth upon eminences and dales so far that, while the nearer ones looked like masts of vessels, the most distant seemed like colored lances stuck into the ground. Their vast numbers surpassed the expectation of the people themselves. One could imagine that some entire nation was fastened to the posts for the amusement of Rome and Csesar. The crowd of spectators halted in front of single masts, as their curiosity was awakened by the figure, age or sex of the victims, were observing the faces, wreaths, ivy-garlands, and then went farther and farther, asking themselves questions full of astonishment: "Could there be so many guilty, or how could children, barely able to walk unassisted, set fire to Rome?" And the astonishment was slowly passing into an uneasiness.

Meanwhile darkness came and the first stars glittered in the sky. Near each condemned stood a slave with a burning torch in hand, and when the sound of trumpets was heard in the various parts of the gardens, as a sign of the beginning of the spectacle, all of them placed the flame to the foot of the posts.

The straw, hidden under the flowers and covered with pitch, instantly burned with a bright flame, which, increasing with every moment, untwined the ivy-garlands, rose upwards and embraced the legs of the victims. The people were silent, the gardens sounded with one immense groan and cry of pain. Some victims, however, raising their heads towards the starry heavens, began to sing in honor of Christ. The people listened. But the hardest hearts were filled with horror, when from the smaller masts rending voices of children began to cry: "Mother! mother!" and a shiver ran even through the drunken spectators at the sight of those little heads and innocent faces, distorted with pain or fainting in the smoke, which began to smother the victims, and was raising upwards and burning through new garlands of roses and ivy. The main and side alleys grew fiery, the tufts of trees and meadows and the flowery spaces, the water in the ponds and pools glittered, the quivering leaves on the trees grew rosy and the gardens became as visible as in the daytime. The smoke of the burnt bodies filled the gardens, but at the same instant the slaves began to pour into the purposely placed censers between the posts myrrh and aloes. Here and there among the people shouts were heard, it was not known whether through compassion or intoxication and delight, and were increasing every moment together with the fire, which embraced the posts, rose to the breasts of the victims, curled with a burning breath the hair on their heads, threw a veil upon their blackened faces, and finally shot up higher yet, as if to the victory and triumph of the power which gave the order to incend it. /

But yet at the beginning of the spectacle Cæsar appeared among the people upon a magnificent circus quadriga, drawn by four white horses; he was dressed as a driver and had the 465

color of the Greens to which he and his court belonged. He was followed by other chariots full of courtiers in splendid apparel, senators, priests and naked Bacchantes with wreaths upon their heads and pitchers of wine in their hands, partly drunk and wildly shouting. At their side musicians dressed as fauns and satyrs, played on cithras, formingas, pipes and horns. On other chariots rode Roman matron? and maidens, also drunk and half naked. At the sides of the quadrigas jumpers shook tirsas ornamented with ribbons; others were beating drums, others were sprinkling flowers. That whole magnificent procession moved onward, shouting "evoel" through the widest garden-road in the midst of the smoke and the human torches. Caesar, having at his side Tigellinus and Chilo, with whose terror he wished to amuse himself, was driving the horses, and advancing slowly he looked upon the burning bodies and at the same time listened to the shouts of the people. Standing on a high golden quadriga, surrounded with a human throng which bowed to his feet in the gleams of the fire, in a golden wreath of a circus victor, he was a head higher than the courtiers and seemed to be a giant. His monstrous arms, extended forward to hold the reins, seemed to bless the people. In his face and the halfclosed eyes he had a smile and he was shining above the people like the sun, or like a deity, terrible but magnificent and mighty.

At times he halted to see more plainly either a maiden whose bosom began to crackle in the fire, or the face of a child distorted by convulsions, and then he continued to ride on, leading behind him the wild and unbridled procession. At times he bowed to the people, then again, inclining backward, he tightened the reins and conversed with Tygellinus. At last reaching the great fountain standing in the middle of two cross streets, he alighted from the quadriga and nod-

ding to his companions he mingled with the crowds.

He was saluted bj<sup>T</sup> shouts and applause. The Bacchantes, nymphes, senators, Augustians, priests, fauns, satyrs and soldiers instantly surrounded him in a wild circle, while he, having at .one side Tygellinus and at the other Chilo, was walking around the fountain, where about fifty torches were burning, stopping before every one, making remarks ?,t the victims or jerring at the old Greek, in whose face there was visible boundless despair.

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At last they stopped before a high mast dressed with myrty and wound around with ivy. The red flames already reached to the knees of the victim, but its face could not have been distinguished at once, for the fresh burning twigs covered it with smoke. In a while, however, the light nightly breeze blew away the smoke and uncovered the head of an old man with a gray beard falling upon his breast.

At this sight Chilo suddenly coiled himself up like a wounded snake, while from his lips escaped a cry more like

a croaking rather than a human voice:

"Glaucus! Glaucus!"

In fact from the burning post Glaucus the physician was

looking down upon him.

He was yet living. His face was suffering and inclined as if he wanted to look upon his executioner who betrayed him, deprived him of his wife, his children, set a murderer upon him, and though all this was forgiven to him in the name of Christ, he delivered him once more to the executioners. Never did a man inflict more terrible and bloody wrongs to another man. And now' the victim was burning upon the pitch post while the executioner was standing at his feet. The eyes of Glaucus did not turn from the face of the Greek. At times the smoke veiled them, but when the breeze blew Chilo saw those eyes staring upon him. He arose and wanted to flee, but he could not. Suddenly it appeared to him as if his feet were of lead and as if an unseen hand held him with superhuman strength before this post. And he became - powerless. He felt- that something was overfilled within him, something tears asunder, that he has enough of tortures and blood, that the end of life approaches and that everything around disappears, Csesar, the court and the throngs, and he is surrounded by some bottomless, terrible and black empty space in which only these eyes of the martyr are seen which summon him to judgment. And Glaucus, dropping his head more and more, was looking continually. Those present guessed that something was going on between those men, but the laughter died upon their lips for there was something terrible in Chilo's face; such a horror and such pain distorted it as if those firetongues were burning his own flesh. Suddenly he staggered, and stretching up his arms he cried with a terrible soulrending voice:

""Glaucus! in. the name of Christ! forgive!!"

All grew silent around; a shiver ran through those present and all the eyes voluntarily were raised up.

And the head of the martyr moved slightly, while from the

top of the mast a voice like a groan was heard:

"I forgive!!"

Chilo threw himself down upon his face, howling like a wild beast, and gathering earth in both hands he sprinkled his head with it. Meanwhile the flames shot up, embraced the breast and the face of Glaucus, untwined the crown of myrtle upon his head, and incended the ribbons on the top of the post, all of which were shining now with a great sparkling light.

But Chilo arose after a while with a face so changed that the Augustians thought that they saw another man. His eyes were burning with an extraordinary gleam; and ecstacy was escaping from his wrinkled forehead; the imbecile Greek of a minute ago looked now as some priest, who,

inspired by a diety, desires to reveal unknown truths.

"What is the matter with him? is he mad?" a few voices

inquired.

But he turned toward the throngs, and extending upwards his right hand, began to call or rather shout so loudly that not only the Augustians but the mob also should be able to hear him.

"Roman people! by my death I swear that those perishing are innocent, and that this one is the incendiary!!!"

And he pointed at Nero with his finger.

A moment of silence followed. The courtiers grew numb. Chilo was standing continually with the stretched, trembling arm turned towards Caesar. Suddenly a tumult arose. The people, like a wave pushed by a sudden squall, rushed toward the aged man in order to look at him more closely. Here and there were heard shouts: "Hold!" then: "Woe to us!" In the people sounded whistling and shouts: "Bronzebeard! matricide! incendiary!" The confusion was increasing with every moment. The Bacchantes were loudly screaming to take refuge upon the chariots; all at once a few of the posts burnt through fell down, scattering sparks around and increasing the tumult. A blind, pressing wave of people, seized Chilo and carried him into the depth of the garden.

Everywhere the posts began to burn through and fall across the streets, filling the alleys with smoke, sparks, smell of burnt wood and the odor of human fat. The lights distant and near were dying out. It grew dark in the gar-dens. The throngs uneasy, gloomy and terrified were pressing toward the gates. The report of what happened passed from mouth to mouth, changed and increased. Some related that Caesar fainted, others that he confessed himself that he ordered to incend Rome, others yet that he fell dangerously sick, others at last that he was taken out as dead upon a chariot. Here and there voices of compassion for the Christians were heard: "They did not burn down Rome, then why so much blood, tortures and injustice? Will not the gods avenge the innocent, and what piacula will appease them again?" The words "innoxia corporia" were repeated oftener and oftener. The women expressed their loud pity for children of whom, so many were thrown as food to wild beasts, nailed to the crosses or burnt in these accursed gardens! And finally the compassion turned into malediction against Csesar and Tygellinus. But there were also some

who, stopping suddenly, asked themselves or others:

1 'What deity is it which gives such a strength in face of tortures and death?" and were returning home iri medita-

tion.

Chilo was yet wandering about the garden, not knowing where to go and in what direction to turn Now he again felt himself an impotent, imbecile and sick old man. At times he stumbled against bodies not quite burnt, or kicked torches, which sent swarms of sparks after him, at times he sat, looking around with an unconscious stare. The gardens grew almost dark; only among the trees moved the pale moon, enlighting with its uncertain light the alleys, posts lying across them, the remains of the victims changed to shapeless masses. But it seemed to the old Greek that he was seeing in the moon the face of Glaucus and that his eyes were looking continually at him, and he concealed himself from the light. At last, however, he emerged from the shadow and voluntarly-, as if pushed by some unknown fQrce he began to move toward the fountain near which Glaucus, gave up his soul. Suddenly some hand touched his shoulder.

The old man turned around, and seeing an unknown figure

he cried with terror:

"Who is there? Who art thou?"

"The Apostle, Paul of Tarsus."

"I am accursed!.... What dost thou want?"

\ And the Apostle answered:

"I want to save thee."

Chilo supported himself against a tree. His legs staggered under him and his arms were hanging down along his body.

"There is no salvation for me!" he said in a hollow voice.

' 'Didst thou not hear that God forgave the thief repenting upon the cross?" asked Paul,

"Dost thou know what I have done?"

"I saw thy suffering and I heard thy testimony to the truth."

"0 Lord!!"

' 'And when Christ's servants forgave thee in the hour of torture and death, why should Christ not forgive thee?"

Chilo seized his head with both hands as if in bewilder-

ment.

"Forgiveness! forgiveness for me?"

"Our God is a God of mercy," answered the Apostle.

"For me," repeated Chilo.

And he began to groan like a man whose strength failed to control his pain and torture.

But Paul said:'

"Lean on me and come."

And taking him he began to walk toward the cross streets, guiding himself by the voice of the fountain, which seemed to weep in the silence of the night over the bodies of those tortured.

"Our God is a God of mercy," repeated the Apostle. "Wert thou to stand at the sea and throw stones into it, could thou fill the depth of the sea with them? But 1 tell thee that the mercy of Christ is like a sea, and that human sins and guilts will drown in it as stones in an abyss. And I tell piee that it is like the heaven which covers mountains, lands and seas, for it is everywhere and there is no bounds nor end to it. Thou hast suffered at the Glaucus post and Christ saw thy suffering. Thou hast said, not minding what may befall thee to-morrow; 'This one is the incendiary!' and Christ will remember thy words. For thy wickedness and falsehood 'lave passed, and a boundless sorrow only

remains in thy heart.... Come with me and listen to what I tell thee: I hated Him also and I persecuted His chosen. I did not want Him and I did not believe in Him until Pie appeared to me and summoned me. And since then He is my love. And now He brought grief, fear and suffering upon thee, to summon thee to Hihi. Thou hast hated Him while he loved thee Thou hast delivered His confessors to tortures but He wishes to forgive and save thee."

An immense sobbing began to shake the breast of the wretch, from which his soul was tearing to the very bottom, while Paul embraced him, took possesion of him and led him

like a soldier leads a prisoner.

And after awhile he began to speak again:

"Follow me and I will lead thee to Him. For what other reason would I come to thee? But He ordered me to gather-human souls in the name of love, and I perform His service. Thou thinkest that thou art accursed, but I tell thee, believe in Him and the salvation awaits thee. eThou thinkest that thou art hated, but I repeat to thee, that He loves thee. Look on me! When I had not Him, I had nothing save the wickedness which was in my heart, but now His love suffices for father and mother to me, for riches and reigning. In Him is the sole refuge, He only will weigh thy sorrow, will see thy wretchedness, will take the fear off thee and will raise thee to Himself."

Saying this he brought him to the fountain, the silver stream of which glittered from a distance in the moonlight. Silence and solitude was around, for the slave service had already removed the charred posts and the bodies of the martyrs.

Chilo threw himself upon his knees with a groan, and hiding his face in his hands, he remained motionless. Paul

raised his face towards the stars and began to pray:

"Lord, look on this wretch, upon his sorrow, upon his tears and torture! Lord of Mercy, who has shed blood for our guilt, by thy torture, by death and resurrection, forgive him!"

Then he grew silent, but fora long time he was looking at the stars and praying. And suddenly from under his feet was heard a calling like a groan: "Christ! Christ! forgive me."

Then Paul approached the fountain, and taking water in his palms he returned to the kneeling wretch.

" 'Chilo! I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and the

Son, and'the Spirit! Amen!"

Chilo raised his head, opened his arms and remained motionless. The moon enlighted with its full light his whitened hair and equally white, motionless face. The moments flowed one after the other; from the great aviary in the gardens of Domicia reached the crowing of the cocks, and he was yet kneeling like a statue.

At last he recovered, rose, and turning to the Apostle

.he asked:

"Master, what shall I do before death?"

Paul also awakened from the reverie over that immense power, against which even such souls as the one of this Greek could not resist, and answered:

"Confide, and give testimony to the truth!"

Then they went out together. At the garden gates the Apostle blessed the old man once more and they parted, for Chilo himself demanded this, forseeing that after what happened Caesar and Tygellinus will order him to be pursued.

In fact he was not mistaken. Returning home, he found his house surrounded by pretorians, who seized him and under the command of Scevinus brought him to the Palatine.

Csesar had already sought rest, but Tygellinus was waiting, and seeing the unfortunate Greek, he greeted him with waim but ominous face.

"Thou hast committed a crime of lese majeste," he said to him, 'and the punishment will not pass thee. But if to-morrow thou wilt declare in the amphitheater, that thou wast drunk and mad and that the Christians are the authors of the fire, thy punishment will end with flogging and expulsion."

"I cannot, master!" answered Chilo in alow voice.

Tygellinus approached him with a slow step, and with an equally low but terrible voice he asked:

"How, thou canst not, thou Grecian dog? Wert thou not drunk and dost thou not understand what is-waiting for thee? Look there 1"

And saying this, he pointed to the corner of the atrium, where at the side of a long wooden bench stood four motionless Thracian slaves with ropes and pincers in their hand.

But Chilo answered:

"I cannot, master!

Tygellinus was seized with fury, but he restained himself. "Hast thou seen," he asked, "how the Christians are

dying? Dost thou want to die thus?"

The old man raised his pale face; for some time his lips moved quietly, then he answered:

"I also believe in Christ."

Tygellinus looked at him with astonishment:

"Dog, thou hast gone mad!"

And suddenly the fury collected in his breast broke the. dam. Springing up to Chilo, he seized him by the beard with both hands, felled him to the ground, and began to trample on him, repeating:

"Thou wilt revoke! thou wilt revoke!"

"I cannot!" answered Chilo from the ground.

"To.the tortures with him!"

Hearing that command, the Thracians seized the old man and laid him on the bench, then fastening him to it by means of ropes they began to squeeze with pincers his emaciated shanks. But he, while they were tying him fast, was kissing with submission their hands, and then he closed his eyes and seemed like dead.

He was living however, for when Tygellinus bent down to him and asked once more: "Wilt thou revoke?" his whitened lips moved slightly, and a barely audible whisper escaped from them:

"I cannot!"

Tygellinus ordered to interrupt the tortures and began to walk around the atrium with face changed by anger, but at the same time helpless. Finally a new thought came to his head evidently, for he turned toward the Thracians and said:

<sup>1</sup> 'Tear out his tongue."

## CHAPTER XX.

The drama "Aureolus" was given usually in theaters or amphitheaters so arranged that they could open and form two separate stages. But after the spectacle in Caesar's gardens the usual way was neglected, for the object was that the greatest possible number of people should see the death of a slave who was devoured by a bear in the drama. In the theaters an actor sewed up in a bear's skin played the part of the bear; this time, however, the spectacle should be "real." This was a new idea of Tygellinus. Caesar at first said that he would not come, but, persuaded by the favorite, he changed his mind. Tygellinus explained to him that after what happened in the gardens he had to show himself to the people, and at the same time he guaranteed that the crucified slave shall not insult him as Crisp us did. The people were rather oversate and tired of the blood-shedding.

so a new distribution of lottery tickets and gifts was promised, as well as an evening feast, for the spectacle was to be presented in the evening; the amphitheater was brilliantly illuminated.

Accordingly, at dark the whole building was closely filled; the Augustians with Tygellinus at the head arrived, not so much for the spectacle itself, as to show to Caesar their loyalty after the last occurrence, and to converse about Chilo,

of whom all Rome spoke.

So it was related to one another's ear that Caesar, returning from the gardens, fell into a frenzy and could not sleep, that terrors and strange visions attacked him, by reason of which on the following morning he announced his early departure for Achaea. Others, however, denied this, asserting that now he will prove to be all the more inexorable concerning the Christians. But cowards too were not lacking who foresaw that the accusation which Chilo threw in Caesar's face in the presence of the people could have the worst consequences possible. Finally there were also such who, through humanity, begged Tygellinus to forbear further prosecutions.

"Look, whither are you going," said Barcus Soranus. "You wanted to satisfy the vengeance of the people and to make them believe that the punishment falls upon the guilty

ones, but the result is just the contrary."

"True!" added Antistius Verus;" all whisper now that they are innocent. If that should be skillfulness then Chilo was right saying that your brain would not fill an acorn shell."

But Tygellinus turned to them and said:

' People whisper also, that thy daughter, Servilia, Barcus Soranus, and thy wife, Antistius, concealed their Christian slaves from the justice of Caesar."

"That is not true!" cried Barcus with alarm.

"Your divorced wives wish to ruin my wife, whose virtue they envy!" cried Antistius Verus with no less alarm.

But others were conversing of Chilo.

"What happened to him?" spoke Eprius Marcellus. "He delivered them himself into Tygellinus' hands; he became rich; he could live quietly till the end of his days, have a beautiful funeral and a grave stone, and yet—no! At once he prepared to loose everything and destroy himself;, indeed he must have gone mad!"

"He did not go mad, but he became a Christian," said

Tygellinus.

"It can not be," said Vitellius.

"And did not I say!" put in Vestinus, "murder Christians as you please, but believe me, do not make war with their deity. No jokes here!.... Look what is going on! I have not burned Rome, but if Caesar would permit me, I would give at once a hecatomb to their deity. And alt should do the same, for I repeat: No jesting with it I Remember that I have told you this."

"And I have said something else," said Petronius..

' Tygellinus laughed when I told him that they defend

themselves, but now I shall saymore: They are conquering!"

"How is that; how is that?" asked a few voices.

"By Pollux! Foi' if such a Chilo could not resist them, who will? If you think that after every spectacle the Christians are not increasing, then with your knowledge of Rome become copper-smiths or begin to shave beards, for then you will know better what the people think and what is going on in the city."

"He speaks pure truth, by the holy peplum of Diana!"

exclaimed Vestinus.

But Barcus turned toward Petronius:

"What art thou drifting to?"

"I finish with this, from what you have begun: enough blood already!"

But Tygellinus looked at him scoflingly and said:

"Eh! a little more yet!"

"If thy head will fail thee thou hast another one—the ball

of thy cane "-answered Petronius.

Further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Caesar, who occupied his place in the company of Pithagoras. Immediately after began the representation of "Auredlus,"

to which not much attention was paid, for the thoughts were occupied with Chilo. The people, accustomed to tortures and blood, were also bored, hissed, gave out shouts not flattering to the court, and called to accelerate the scene with the bear, for which they were curious. If not for the hope to see the condemned old man and for the gifts, the

spectacle alone would not be able to hold the people.

But finally the expected moment arrived. The circus servants first carried in a wooden cross, quite low, so that the bear, standing on his hind feet, might reach the breast of the martyr, and then two men led in or rather dragged in Chilo, for, having shattered leg-bones, he could not walk alone. They laid him and nailed him to the cross so quickly that the curious Augustians could not even see him well, and only after the cross was fastened in a pit purposely prepared, all eyes turned towards him. But only few were able to recognize the former Chilo in this naked old man. After the tortures which Tygellinus ordered to inflict upon him not a drop of blood remained in his face, and only upon the white beard was seen a red mark, left by blood after the tearing out out of the tongue. Through the transparent skin his bones were almost seen. He seemed much older and decrepit. But on the other hand, formerly his eyes were throwing glances full of uneasiness and malice, his watchful face formerly reflected continuous fear and uncertainty; while now his face was painful, but so sweet and reposed. May be the remembrance of the thief upon the cross whom Christ forgave, was giving confidence to him, or perhaps he was speaking in his soul to the merciful God: "Lord, I was biting like a venomous worm, but I was a poor wretch through all my life, was dying of hunger, people trampled upon me, beat me and abused me. I was, 0 Lord, Jk>or and very wretched and yet they have put me to torture and nailed me to a cross; then Thou, Merciful, wilt not reject me in the hour of death!" And evidently peace descended to his broken heart. Nobody laughed, for there was in this crucified man something so peaceful, he seemed so old, defenseless, weak, so calling for pity with his submission, that involuntarily everybody asked himself the "How is it possible to torture and crucify people who are dying?" The people were silent. Among the Augustians Vestinus, bowing to the right and left, whispered

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with a terrified voice: "Look how they are dying!" Others were waiting for the bear, wishing at soul that the spectacle

should end as soon as possible.

The bear at last rolled into the arena, and shaking his low bowed head from side to side was looking as if he meditated over something or sought something. Perceiving the cross and the naked body upon it, he approached it, arose, but in a while he dropped again upon his forelegs, and sitting near the cross he began to grumble as if even in his animal heart spoke pity over this human remnant.

From the lips of the circus servants came urging shouts, but the people were silent. Chilo meanwhile raised his head with a slow movement and for some time he let his eyes glide over the audience. Finally his eyes stopped somewhere on the highest rows of the amphitheater, his breast began to heave more lively, and then something happened which brought the spectators in admiration and astonishment. For his face brightened up with a smile, his forehead was surrounded as if with rays, his eye's looked upwards before the death and after a while two large tears collecting under the lids flowed slowly down his face.

And he died.

And suddenly some clear man's voice called from the top nuder the velarium:

"Peace to the martyrs 1!"

Dull silence reigned in the amphitheater.

## CHAPTER XXI.

After the spectacle in Caesar's garden few prisoners remained. True, victims suspected of confession of the Oriental superstitious practice were seized and imprisoned, but the researches supplied less and less of them, scarcely what were necessary to fill the coming spectacles, which also were nearing the end. The people, oversated with blood, showed more weariness and ever increasing uneasiness by reason of the conduct of the victims. The fears of the superstitious Vestin us seized thousands of souls. In the throngs were related wonderful things of the vengefulness of the Christian Deity The prison typhus which spread

over the city increased the general fear. Often funerals were seen, and they repeated from ear to ear that new piacula are-necessary to appease the unknown God. In the temples offerings to Jupiter and Libitina were brought. Finally, notwithstanding all the efforts of Tygellinus and his sticklers, the opinion was spreading that the city was burnt by the order of Caesar, and that the Christians suffered innocently.

But for this very reason Caesar and Tygellinus did not cease their persecutions. For the quieting of the people new orders in regard to the distribution of grain, wine and olive oil were issued; rules were published facilitating the rebuilding of houses, full of alleviations for the owners, as well as other rules concerning the width of the streets and the materials from which to build in order to avoid the disaster of fire in the future. Caesar himself was present at the meetings of the Senate and was deliberating together with the fathers on the welfare of the people and the city, but not a shadow of favor fell upon the condemned. The ruler of the world cared first of all to impress the conviction into the people that such merciless punishments could meet only the guilty ones. In the Senate no voice spoke in favor of the Christians, for no one wished to offend Caesar, and besides, people looking farther in the future asserted that in the presence of the new faith the foundations of the Roman Empire could not hold out.

Only those dying and dead were returned to the families, for the Roman law did not take revenge upon on the dead.

The thought that if Lygia dies then he will bury her in the family vault and will rest himself at her side, was a relief to Vinicius. He did not have hope any longer of saving her froih death, and himself being half separated from life, completely absorbed in Christ, did not dream of any other union except the eternal one. His belief became simply bottomless, so that in its presence that eternity seemed to him something far more real and true than the passing existence in which he had lived until now. His heart was filled with happiness. In life he was changing to a being almost superhuman, which, longing for complete freedom for itself, desired it also for another beloved soul. He imagined that he and Lj'gia would take each other by the hands and go to Heaven, where Christ will bless them and will permit them

to live in a light as calm and brilliant as the dawn. He implored only that Christ should spare circus tortures to Lygia and permit her to fall asleep peacefully in the prison, for he felt with perfect certainty that he would die with her himself. He thought that in view of this sea of spilled blood he was not even permitted to expect that she alone should be saved. He heard from Peter and Paul that they also must die as martyrs. The sight of Chilo upon the cross convinced him that death, even of a martyr, might be sweet; therefore he wished for the death of both of them, as a desired change from a sorrowful and hard fate to a better one.

At moments he had a foretaste of the life beyond the grave. That sorrow which was over their souls was loosing more and more its burning bitterness, and gradually was changing into some peaceful abandonment of this world to' the will of God. Formerly Vinicinus swam with difficulty against the current, struggled and tired himself; now he' gave himself up to the wave, believing that it carries him toward an eternal peace. He guessed that Lygia as well as himself was preparing for death; that notwithstanding the walls of the prison separating them they are going together, and he smiled at that thought as at happiness.

And in fact they were acting in such harmony as if they had exchanged their thoughts mutually every day. In Lygia there were no desires nor any hope save the hope of the life beyond the grave. Death appeared to her not only as the liberation from the terrible prison walls, from the hands of Cmsar and Tygellinus, not only as the salvation, but also as the time of her marriage with Vinicinus. In the presence of this uushaken certainty everything else was losing importance. After death earthly happiness awaited her, so she waited for it as the. betrothed waits the wedding time.

And that immense current of belief which was carrying beyond the grave thousands of these first confessors seized Ursus also. And be too for a long time did not wish to agree at heart upon the death of Lygia, but as every day through the prison walls came news about what was going, on in the amphitheatres and the gardens, death seemed an unavoidable lot to all Christians, as well as their good, above all mortal comprehension of happiness, even he at last dared not to pray to Christ to deprive Lygia of that happiness Or to defer it for many years. In his simple soul of a barQUO VADIS. 479

Parian he thought at the same time that to the daughter of the leader of the Lygians belong special favors, and that she will receive more of those heavenly delights than a whole multitude of simple people to whom he belonged himself, and that in the eternal glory she shall sit nearer to "the Lamb" than others. He heard, it is true, that before God all men are equal; in the bottom of his soul, however, was a conviction that the daughter of a chief, a chief of all the Lygians, is not a slave. He expected also that Christ would permit him to continue to serve her. In regard to himself he had only one hidden desire, that was to die upon a cross, as "the Lamb" died. But this seemed such a great happiness to him that although he knew that in Rome even the worst criminals are crucified he dared not even pray for such a death. He thought that they would have him perish under the teeth of wild beasts, and this formed his innermost sorrow. From a child he lived in impenetrable forests, among continuous hunts, by which, thanks to his superhuman strength, he was famous among the Lygians before he g<rew up to manhood. They formed his occupation, so that afterwards when he was in Rome and had to renounce them he came often to the vivaria and the amphitheaters in order to look at least at the beasts known and unknown to him. Their sight was awakening in him an irresistible desire of fighting and killing, therefore at present he was afraid that when he meets them in the amphitheater thoughts will attack him which will be less becoming to a Christian who ought to die piously and patiently. But in this also he recommended himself to Christ, finding consolation in sweeter thoughts. For, hearing that 'the Lamb" had declared war against hell and evil spirits, which the Christian faith considered all the pagan deities, he thought that in this war he might be very useful to "the Lamb" and that he -will be able to serve Him better than others, for he could not understand either that his soul should not be stronger than the souls of other martyrs. So he prayed whole days, rendered services to the prisoners, helped the overseers and consoled his princess, who sometimes regretted that during her short life she was not able to perform as many good deeds as were performed by the famous Thabita, of whom some time ago Peter the Apostle related to her. The guards, who feared the terrible strength of this giant even in the prison, for no

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chains nor gratings were proof against it, at last began to love him for his goodness. More than once astonished at his good character they asked him for its cause, and he answered them with such an unshaken certainty what life awaits after death that they listened to him with amazement, seeing for the first time that happiness can penetrate to the undergrounds impenetrable to the sun. And when he was persuading them to believe in <1 the Lamb, " it came to more than one's head that his service is a service of a slave, and the life a life of a wretch, and more than one thought of his evil lot which should end only in death.

Only that the death filled them with new fear, and they did not promise themselves anything after it, while that Lygian giant and that girl like a flower thrown upon the prison straw was going towards death with joy as if toward, the

gates of happiness.

# CHAPTER XXII.

One evening Senator Scevinus visited Petronius and began a long conversation regarding the hard times in which they both were living, and also about Caesar. But he was speaking so openly that Petronius, though friendly with him, began to be cautious. He complained that the world goes wrong and madly, and that, everything taken together, must end with some disaster more terrible than the conflageration of Rome. He spoke that even the Augustians are discontented; that Fenius Ruffus, second prefect of the pretorians, endures with the greatest constraint the disgraceful ruling of Tygellinus, and that the whole generation of Seneca is brought to extremes by the action of Caesar in regard to the old master as well as to Lucanus. Finally he began to mention the dissatisfaction of the people and even of pretorians, of whom the largest part were won over by Fenius Ruff us.

"Why dost thou speak thus?" asked Petronius.

"Through the anxiety for Caesar," answered Scevinus; "I have a distant relative among the pretorians, whose name is Scevinus, same as mine, and through him I know what is going on in the" camp.... The discontention there is also

increasing.... Caligula, thou seest, was also mad, and look

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what happened! Cassius Cherea appeared.. . It was a terrible deed and probably there is no one among us who would praise it, yet Cherea liberated the world of a monster."

"Or," answered Petronius, "thou sayest so: 'I do not praise Cherea, but he was a perfect man and may the

.gods give us as many such ones as possible."

But Scevinius changed the conversation and unexpectedly began to praise Piso. He glorified his generation, his magnanimity, his affection for his wife, and lastly his good sense, calmness and the wonderful gift of winning over

people.

"Caesar is childless," he said, "and all see a successor in Piso. Undoubtedly too, everyone would help him to gain the rule. He is liked by Fenius Ruffus; the family of Anneus is devoted to him. Plaucius Lateranus and Tullius Senecio would jump into fire for him. So would Natalis and Subrius, Flavius and Sulpicius Asper and Atranius Quincianus, and even Vestinus."

"From the last one Piso will not profit much," answered

Petronius. "Vestinus fears his own shadow."

"Vestinus fears dreams and ghosts," answered Scevinus,

1 but he is a brave man, whom rightly they wish to nominate for a consul. And that in his soul he is opposed to the persecution of the Christians thou must not blame him, for it is also of importance to thee that this madness should cease."

"Not to me, but to Vinicius," said Petronius. " Out of consideration for Vinicius I would like to save one girl, but

I can not, for I have lost the favor of Brozebeard."

"How is that? Dost thou not notice that Csesar again is approaching thee and begins to converse with thee? And I will tell thee why. Because he again prepares to leave for Achsea, where he is to sing Greek songs of his own composition. He is burning for that journey, but at the same time he trembles at the thought of the jeering disposition of the Greeks. He imagines that either the greatest triumph or the greatest failure might befall him. He needs a good counsel, and he knows that no one can give him a better one than thou. This is the reason for which thou art returning to favor."

"Lucanus could take my place."

<sup>11</sup> The. Brozebeard hates him and destines him for death. He is looking only for a pretext,-for he looks always for pre-

texts. Lucanus understands that haste is necessary."

"By Castor!" said Petronius, "may be. But I could, have one more way of returning quickly to favors."

"Which?"

" To repeat to the Brozebeard what thou hast said to me a minute ago."

"I did not say anything!" cried Scevinus with uneas-

iness.

But Petronius placed his hand upon Scevnus' shoulder:

"Thou hast called Caesar a madman; thou hast foreseen the succession of Piso and hast said, Lucan understands that haste is necessary. What haste, my friend?"

Scevinus grew pale, and for a minute they looked into

each others' eyes.

"Thou wilt not repeat!"

"By the hips of Kypris! How well thou knowest me.. No! I shall not repeat. I have not heard anything, but; neither do I wish to hear anything.... Dost thou understand? Life is too short to undertake trouble. I beg thee only to visit Tygellinus to-day and to converse with him just as long as with me of what thou pleasest.

"Why?"

"Because, that if some day Tygellinus shall tell me:

Scevinus was with thee,' I could be able to answer: \* He was also with thee on the same day.'"

Sevinus hearing this, broke an ivory cane which he had in

his hand and answered:

"May the evil spell fall upon this cane! I shall be with Tygellinus to-day, and afterwards at Nerva's feast. Thou wilt be there too? In any event till we meet in the amphitheater the day after to-morrow, where the rest of the Christians will appear, good-bye."

"The day after to-morrow!" repeated Petronius remaining alone. "Then there is no time so loose. Bronzebeard needs me indeed in Achaea, so perhaps he will consider my

wishes." And he decided to try the last means.

In fact, at Nerva's feast Caesar demanded that Petronius should sit opposite him for he wished to converse with him of Achaea and of cities in which he could appear with the prospects of the greatest success. He cared none for the Athenians, whom he feared. Other Augustians listened attentively to this conversation, in order that catch-

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ing fragments of Petronius' sentences, they could give them out afterwards for their own.

"It seems to me, that I was not living till now," said Nero, "and that only in Greece I shall be born."

"Thou wilt be born for new glory and immortality," an-

swered Petronius

'I trust that it will happen so, and that Apollo will not prove jealous. If I return with triumph, I shall offer him a hecatomb, the like of which no god has had before."

Scevinus began to repeat the verse of Horace:

"Sic te diva potens Cypri, Sic fratres Helen ad, lucida sidera, Ventorumque regat Pater...."

<sup>1</sup> 'The vessel is ready at Neapolis," said Csesar. <sup>1</sup> 'I would like to depart even to-morrow."

To this Petronius arose, and looking straight in Nero's

'eyes, he said:

"Thou wilt permit, 0 godlike, that first I shall give a wedding feast, to which I invite thee before others."

"A wedding feast? What one?" asked Nero.

"That of Vinicius with the daughter of the King of Lygians, and thy hostage. It is true she is in the prison at present; but first, as a hostage she cannot be imprisoned, and secondly, thyself hast permitted Vinicius to marry her, and as thy decrees, as those of Zeus, are irrevocable,—thou wilt order to free her from the prison, and I shall give her to the bridegroom."

The cool, calm self-possession with which Petronius spoke, impressed Nero, who was always disturbed when Petronius

spoke to him in that manner.

"I know," he answered, dropping his eyes. "I thought of her and of that giant, who strangled Croton."

"In this case both are saved," answered Petronius calmly.

But Tygellinus came to his master's assistance!

'She is in prison by the will of Csesar, and thou hast said thyself, Petronius, that his decrees are irrevocable."

All those present, knowing the history of Vinicius and Lygia, knew perfectly well what was the matter in question, so they became silent, curious to know how it will end.

"She is in prison through thy mistake and through thy ignorance of the law of nations," answered Petronius forcibly. "Thou, Tygellinus, art a naive man, but even thou wilt not

-assert ¡that she burned Rome, because to assert this, Caesar would not believe thee."

But Nero had recovered, and began to wink his eyes with ; an expression of indescribable malice.

"Petronius is right," he said after a while. Tygellinus looked with astonishment at him.

• Petroniusis right," repeated Nero; "to-morrow the gates of the prison will be open to her, and the day after to-morrow, in the amphitheater, We shall speak of the wedding feast."

"I have lost again," thought Petronius.

And, returning home, he was so certain that the end of Lygia's life had arrived that he dispatched a reliable freedman to agree with the overseer of the spoliarium as to the delivery of her body, for he wished to give it to Vinicius.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

In Nero's time came into vogue evening spectacles in the · Circus as well as in the amphitheater; these were formerly rare and only exceptionally given. The Augustians liked them, for often they were followed by feasts and carouses lasting till morning. Although the people were oversate of blood-spilling,—still when the news spread that the end of : spectacles was approaching, and that the last Christians were to die in the evening spectacle, countless throngs arrived at the Circus. The Augustians to the last man came, for they guessed that this would not be a usual spectacle and that Caesar decided to have a tragedy to cause Vinicius to suffer. Tygellinus kept secret what kind of a torture was intended for the betrothed of the young tribune, but this excited the general curiosity more. Those who had seen Lygia at Plautius' related wonders of her beauty. Others were occupied with the question whether they would really see her to-day on the arena, for many who had heard the answer which Caesar gave to Petronius at Nerva's interpreted it in two ways. Some supposed directly that Nero would give Lygia back to Vinicius, or perhaps had given her back already. It was remembered that she was a hostage, who consequently was free to worship such deities as she pleased and whom the law of . nations did not permit to puDish.

The uncertainty, expectation and curiosity seized all the spectators. Csesar arrived earlier than usual, and together with his arrival they began to whisper again that something extraordinary will probable take place, for Nero was accompanied by Tygellinus and Vatinus—by Cassius, a centurion of gigantic stature and gigantic strength, whom Csesar used to take along only when he wished to have a defender at his side—for instance when he had a fancy for night expeditions, to the Subura, where he arranged an amusement called "sagatio," consisting in tossing up the maidens met on the way upon a military cloak. It was noticed also that in the amphitheater itself certain precautions were undertaken. The pretorian guards were increased, while the command wasnot held by a centurion, but by the tribune Subrius Flavius, known till now by his blind devotion to Nero. Then it wasunderstood that Csesar desired in any event to protect himself from the outburst of despair of Vinicius, and the curiosity increased still more.

All eyes turned with strained attention to the place where the unfortunate bridegroom was sitting. He, very pale, his forehead covered with drops of sweat, was uncertain as were the other spectators, but alarmed and despondent. Petronius himself, not knowing exactly what would take place, did not tell him anything, but asked him, returning from Nerva, whether he was prepared for everything, and then—whether he would be present at the spectacle. Vinicius answered to both questions, "Yes!" but at the same time a shiver ran through his entire body, for he guessed that Petronius did not ask without a cause. Vinicius himself for some time was living as if with half life; he sunk into death himself and consented to Lygia's death, for it had to be the liberation and wedding for them both. But now he learned that it was one thing to think from afar of the last moment as of quietly falling asleep, and another to go and look on the tortures of a being dearer than life. All pains formerly felt, sounded anew in him. The silenced despair began to cry in his soul; the former desire to save Lygia at any price seized him. Since the morning he was trying to enter the cuniculi to see whether she was there, but the pretorian guards were watching every entrance and the orders were so strict that soldiers, even those known by him, were not mollified either by prayer or by gold. It -seemed to Vinicius that the uncertainty would kill him before he would see the spectacle. Somewhere in the bottom of his heart the hope was . yet throbbing- that perhaps Lygia was not in the amphitheater and that all fears were groundless. At times he clung to this hope with all his strength. He said to himself that Christ could take her from the prison, but he could not permit her to be tortured in the Circus. Formerly he consented in everything to His will; now repulsed' from the doors of the cuniculi, he returned to his seat in the amphitheater, and when he learned from the curious looks turned upon him that the most horrible suppositions might be true, he began to beg Christ for help with .<a href="mailto:</a> an ardor almost, similar to a threat.

"Thou canst!" he repeated, clenching his fists convulsively, "Thou canst!" Before, he did no even suppose, that this moment, when changed to reality, should be so terrible. Now, in his frenzied state of mind, he had a consciousness that if he would see the torture ,of Lygia, then his love would turn to hatred and his belief to despair. And at the same time he was terrified by the consciousness, for he feared to offend Christ, whom he begged for mercy and a miracle. He did not pray any more for her life; he wished only that she -should die before taken upon the arena, and from the bottomless abyss of suffering he repeated from his heart: "At least do not refuse this, and I will love Thee still more than I loved Thee till now." At last his thoughts ran wild, like .. waves torn by a squall. A desire of vengeance and blood arose in him. A furious wish seized him to rush at Nero and strangle him in the presence of all the spectators, and at the same time he felt that with this desire he offends Christ and breaks His commandment. At moments through his head flashed rays of hope that all this before which his soul trembled will be turned away by the all powerful and merciful hand, but they died out instantly as if in an immense sorrow that He who could with one word destroy the Circus and save Lygia, deserted her, although she confided in Him and loved Him with all the strength of her pure heart. And he thought that she was yet lying in the dark cuniculum, weak, defenseless, deserted, abandoned to the discretion of the brutal guards, may be giving up last breath, while he must wait helplessly in this terrible amphitheater, not knowing what torture was intended for her,

and what he shall see in a while. Finally, like a man who, falling into a pit, clutches at everything that grows on itsedge, so did he catch hold with both hands of the thought that only through belief could he save her. For only this remained! For Peter said that with faith one could move the earth in its foundations!

Therefore he collected his thoughts, crushed the doubt in himself, put his whole being into one word: "I believe,"

and he waited for a miracle.

But as an overstretched cord must break, so his efforts broke him. The paleness of a corpse covered his face and his body began to stiffen. Then he thought that his prayer had been heard, for he was dying. It seemed to him that Lygia, undoubtedly must have died already and that Christ takes them to Himself in this way. The arena, white togas of countless spectators, lights of thousands of lamps and torches, all disappeared from his eyes.

But this weakness did not last long. Ia a while he recovered, or rather he was aroused by the stamping of the

impatient throngs.

"Thou art sick?" said Petronius to him. "Order to carry

thee home!"

And, not caring for what Caesar will say to it, he arose to, support Vinicius and to go out with him. His heart was filled with pity, and besides he was irritated beyond endurance by Cassar looking through an emarld at Vinicius, studying with satisfaction his suffering, perhaps to describe it afterwards in pathetic lines and win the applause of the hearers.

Vinioius shook his head. He could die in this amphitheater but he could not leave it. The spectacle anyway

was to begin any moment.

In fact, almost at the same moment the city prefect threw a red handkerchief before him and at this sign the hinges opposite the imperial podium creaked and Ursus came out upon the brilliantly lighted arena from the dark opening.

The giant winked his eyelids, evidently dazzled by the light of the arena, then he moved to the center, looking around as if wishing to see his adversary. It was known to all Augustians and to the larger part of the spectators-that this was the man who strangled Croton, therefore at the sight of him a murmur was heard on all the benches. In

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Borne gladiators were not lacking who were much larger than ordinary human size, but the like of him the eyes of the Quirites had never seen before. Cassius standing in the podium behind Caesar seemed tiny compared with this Lygian. Senators, vestals, Cassar, Augustians and the people looked with the delight of connoisseurs and experts upon his powerful stout legs like trunks of a tree, upon his breast like two joined shields, and upon his powerful arms. The murmur increased with every moment. For these throngs there did not exist any greater delight than to see such muscles in play, in strain and in combat. The murmur was changing to shouts and feverish questions, Where does the nation exist that produces such giants, while he stood in the center of the amphitheater naked, more like a stone statue than like a man, with the collected and at the same time sad face of a barbarian, and seeing the empty arena he was looking astonished with his childish'blue eyes now upon the spectators, now upon Caesar, now again upon the gratings of the cuniculi, whence he expected his executioners.

In the moment when he was entering the arena his simple heart throbbed for the last time with the hope that a cross maybe was waiting for him, but seeing neither a cross nor a prepared pit he thought that he was unworthy of that favor and that he would have to die in another way and probably from beasts. He was defenseless and he desired to perish as became the confessor of "the Lamb"—peacefully and patiently. Meanwhile he wished to pray to the Saviour, so kneeling down upon the arena he folded his hands and raised his eyes toward the stars glittering through the upper opening of the Circus.

This attitude did not please the throngs. They had enough of those Christians dying like sheep. They understood that if the giant will not defend himself the spectacle will be a failure. Here and there hissings were heard. Some began to call for mastygofori, whose office it was to whip the combatants who were unwilling to fight. In a while however everything grew quiet, for nobody knew what waited for the giant, and whether he will not wish to fight

when he will meet death face to face.

In fact they did not wait long. Suddenly the shrill sound of brass trumpets was heard and at this sign the grating opposite the imperial podium opened and a monstrous Ger-

manic urus (bison) bearing on bis bead the naked body of awoman, rushed upon the arena among the shouts of the beast keepers.

"Lygia! Lygia!" cried Vinicius.

And he seized his hair at the temples, wriggled like a man who feels the point of a spear, and in a hoarse, unhuman voice he began to repeat:

"I believe! I believe!.... Christ! a miracle!!"

And he did not feel that in this moment Petronius covered his head with a toga. It seemed to him that it was death or pain which veils his eyes. He did not look, he did not see. A feeling of a certain terrible emptiness seized him. In his head no thought remained, his lips repeated only, as if in madness:

"I believe! I believe! I believe!..."

Suddenly the amphitheater became silent. The Augustians rose from their seats as one man, for on the arenasomething extraordinary happened. The Lygian, submissive and prepared for death, perceiving his ward upon the horns of a wild beast, started as if burned with fire, and bending his back he began to run straight towards the furious animal.

From every breast escaped a short shout of astonishment,, after which followed a dull silence. The Lygian meanwhile reached the furious steer and seized him by the horns.

1 'Look!" cried Petronius, tearing off the toga from the

eyes of Vinicius.

The latter arose, raised his pale face and began to look upon the arena with glassy, unconscious eyes.

All breasts ceased to breath. One could hear a fly in the amphitheatre. The people could not believe their own eyes. Since Rome was founded nothing like this was ever seen.

The Lygian held the wild beast by the horns. His feet were dug into the sand above his ankles, his back bent like a. ch-awn bow, his head was hidden between his shoulders, themuscles upon his arms came out so that the skin was breaking from the pressure, but he stopped the steer on the spot. The man and the beast remained motionless, the spectators thought they were seeing some pictures representing deeds of Hercules or Tezeus, or a group chiseled out of stone. But in this seeming quietness, one could see the terrible exertion of two struggling forces. The urus as well as

the man dug his feet in the sand, while his dark, shaggy body contracted so it seemed like a gigantic ball. Who would be exhausted first? who shall fall first? that was the question which the spectators asked in fights, that was of more importance than their own fate, than the entire Rome and its rule over the world. That Lygian was for them a demigod, worthy of honor and statues. Caesar himself arose. He with Tygellinus purposely arranged such spectacle, hearing of that man's strength and jeering; they said to themselves: "Let then that slayer of Croton conquer an urus, which he will pick out for him," but now they looked in astonishment upon the picture which they had before themselves, as if not believing that this could be reality. In the amphitheater people could be seen who, raising their hands, had remained in that posture. Sweat covered the faces of others as if they struggled with the beast themselves. In the Circus were heard only the hissing sound of the flames in the lamps and the rustle of pieces of coal falling from the torches. Voices died in the mouths of spectators, while hearts were beating in the breasts as if trying to burst them. To all it seemed that the struggled lasted for hours.

And the man with the beast stood continually in the terri-

ble exertion, one would say-fixed into the ground.

Suddenly a dull roar like a groan sounded from the arena, after which a shout escaped from all the breasts, and silence reigned again. The people thought themselves dreaming, for the monstrous head of the steer began to twist in the iron bauds of the barbarian.

The face of the Lygian—his neck and shoulders grew purple-red, his back bent still more. It was evident that he collected the rest of his superhuman strength, and also that it would not last long.

Duller, hoarser and more painful, became the roar of the urus as it grew mingled with the whistling breath of the giant's breast. The animal's head turned more and more, while from his jaws a long, foaming tongue hung out.

A moment, and the ears of the nearer spectators heard a sound as if of breaking bones, after which the beast fell down to the earth with his neck broken.

Then the giant removed quickly the ropes from the horns, and taking the maiden in his arms, he began to breathe heavily.

His face grew pale, his hair was stuck together with sweat,, his shoulders and arms seemed to be sprinkled with water. Tor a moment he stood as if half conscious, then he raised, his eyes and began to look at the spectators.

And the amphitheater went wild.

The walls of the building began to tremble from the shouts, of many thousands of spectators. Since the beginning of the games no excitement like this was ever heard. Those sitting in the higher rows left them and began to descend down, crowding themselves in the passages between the benches to see the strong man. From everywhere sounded voices calling for mercy—passionate, persistent, which soon changed to one general shout. That giant became now dear to the people enamoured in physical strength, and the first personage in Rome.

He understood that the people demanded his life to be spared and his liberty returned, but evidently he cared not for himself only. For a while he looked around, then he approached the emperor's podium and, swaying the body of the maiden in his extended arms, he raised his eyes with an expression of an imploring request, as if he wanted to say:

"Have mercy on her! save her! for her I have done this!"

The spectators understood perfectly what he demanded. At the sight of the unconscious maiden, who by the side of the immense body of the Lygian seemed a little child,—emotion seized the people, the knights and senators. Her small figure, as white as if cut from alabaster, her fainting, the terrible danger from which the giant saved her, and finally her beauty and his attachment touched their hearts. Some supposed that this was a father begging mercy for his child. Pity broke out like a flame. They had enough of blood, enough of death, enough of tortures. Voices stifled with tears began to call for mercy for both.

Ursus meanwhile moved around the arena and, swaying the girl upon his arms continually, he entreated with this; motion and his eyes for her life. Suddenly Vinicius sprang up from his seat, jumped over the railing separating thefirst seats from the arena, and, running up to Lygia, he cov-

ered her naked body with a toga.

Then he tore open his tunic from his breast, uncovered the scars left by wounds received in the Armenian war, and extended hi's .arms toward the people. 492

"Then the excitement of the people surpassed everything yet seen in the amphitheatres. The mob began to stamp and howl Voices calling for mercy became simply threatening. The people interposed now not only for the athlete, but defended the maiden, the soldier, and their love. Thousands of spectators turned toward Caesar with gleams of anger in their eyes and with clenched fists. But the latter lingered and hesitated; true, he had no hatred against Vinicius and the death of Lygia was of no importance to him, but he 'would rather see the body of the girl, ripped open by the horns of the steer or torn by the teeth of beasts. His cruelty as well as his degenerate imagination and degenerate idesires found certain pleasure in similar spectacles. And now the people wanted to deprive him of it. At this thought anger was expressed on his fat face. Self-love did not permit him to submit to the will of the people, but at the same time he dared not, through his inborn cowardice, to

So he looked around among the Augustians to see if he would notice fingers turned downwards in sign of death. But Petronius held his palm uplifted, looking at the same time almost defyingly into Caesar's face. The superstitious but inclined to excitement, Vestinus, who feared ghosts though he feared no man, gave the sign of mercy. The same did Scevinus the senator, the same Nerva, the same Tullius Senecio, the same the famous old leader Ostorius Scapula, the same Antistius, the same Piso, and Vetus, and Crispinus, and Minucius Termus, and Pontius Telesinus, and Traseas, the most dignified arid honored of them all. At this sight Caesar removed the emerald from his eye with an expression of contempt and offense, when suddenly Tygellinus, who wished to vex Petronius, bent to Nero and said:

"Do not submit, godlike; we have the pretorians."

Then Nero turned in the direction where the grim and devoted Subrius Flavius held the command over the pretorians and he saw an uncommon thing. The face of the old tribune was grim, but flooded with tears, and he was holding up his hand in sign of mercy.

Meanwhile the throngs were seized with rage. Clouds of dust arose from under the stamping feet and veiled the amphitheater. Among the shouts were heard: "Ahenobarbus!

Matricide! Incendiary!"

Nero became terrified. The people were all-powerful masters in the Circus. The preceding Cæsars, especially Caligula, dared sometimes to go against their will, which, however, always caused riots, ending at times in bloodshed. But Nero was in a different situation. First, as a comedian and a singer, he needed the people's favor; secondly, he wanted to have them on his side against the senate and the patricians; and finally, after the conflagration of Borne, he tried by all means to win them over and turn their anger against the Christians. He understood at last that to oppose longer would be dangerous. A riot, started in the Circus, could: spread over the whole city and have unforeseen consequences.

Once more he looked at Subrius Flavius, at the centurion Scevinus, a relative of the senator, at the soldiers, and seeing everywhere wrinkled brows, moved faces and eyes fixed

upon himself, he gave the sign of mercy.

A thunder of applause sounded from above and below. The people were now certain of the lives of those, condemned, for from this moment on they came under their protection, and even Cæsar would not dare to persecute them with his vengeance any longer.

# CHAPTER XXIV.

Four Bitynians were carrying Lygia carefully to the house of Petronius, while Vinicius and Ursus were walking alongside, hurrying to deliver her as soon as possible into the hands of the Greek physician. They are walking silently, for after the events of that day they were unable to converse. Vinicius was yet half conscious. He repeated to himself that Lygia is saved, that neither prisonn or death in the Circus menace her now; that their calamities ended once for all and that he would take her home not to be separated from her any more. And it seemed to him that it was a beginning of some other life than a reality. From time to time he bent over the open litter, to look upon this beloved face, which by the moonlight seemed asleep, and repeated in his thought: "It is she! Christ has saved her! " He remembered also that to the spoliarium, where he with Ursus carried Lygia, came a physician unknown to him, and assured him that the:

girl was living and would recover. Tire thought of this happiness distended his breast so that at times he grew weak, and unable to walk alone, he supported himself against Ursus. Ursus was looking at the sky studded over with

stars and was praying.

They walked hurriedly through streets on which newly erected white houses were gleaming brightly in the moonlight.' The city was deserted. Here and there crowds of people crowned with ivy, availing themselves of the wonderful night rand festal time, which lasted since the beginning of the spectacles, sang and danced to the sound of the flute in front of the porticos. Only when they were near the house Ursus ceased to pray and began to speak in a low tone, as if he feared to wake Lygia.

<sup>11</sup> Master, it was the Saviour who preserved her from death. When I saw her upon the horns of the urns I heard a voice in my soul: 'Defend her!' and this undoubtedly was the voice of the Lamb. The prison devoured my strength, but it returned to me for that moment and He inspired those cruel

people to take her part. His will be done!"

And Vinicius answered:

"May His name be worshipped!"

But he could not speak further. An excessive desire possessed him to throw himself upon the earth and thank the

Saviour for the miracle and the mercy.

Meanwhile they reached the house; the servants, apprized by a slave purposely sent in advance, swarmed out to meet them. Paul of Tarsus converted the larger part of these people in Ancium. They knew perfectly -well of the misfortunes of Vinicius, therefore their joy at the sight of the victims snatched away from Nero's malice was immense, and it increased still more when the physician, Theocles, after examining Lygia declared that she did not suffer any serious wound, and that after the passing of the weakness caused by the prison fever she will regain health.

The same night consciousness returned to her. Awakening in a splendid cubiculum, lighted by Corinthian lamps, amidst the scent of verbena, she knew not where she was or What was taking place. She remembered the moment in which she was fastened to the horns of the chained steer, and now seeing above her Vinicius' face, she judged that prob-

ably they were not on the earth any more. The thoughts

were mingled in her weakened head; it seemed quite natural to her that they stopped somewhere on the way to heaven by reason of her weariness and weakness. Not feeling however any pain, she smiled to Vinicius and wanted to ask him where they were, but from her lips escaped only a low whisper, in which Vinicius could barely distinguirh his name.

So he knelt down near her and placing his hand lightly

upon her forehead he said:

"Christ has saved thee and returned thee to me!"

Her lips moved again in an unintelligible whisper, but after a while her eyelids closed, her breast heaved with a sigh and she fell into a deep sleep, which was expected by the physician, Theocles, and after which he foresaw her return to health.

And Vinicius remained near her kneeling in prayer. Theocles repeatedly entered the cubiculum, the goldenhaired head of Eunice appeared several times from behind the half opened curtain; at last the cranes bred in the gardens began to cry, announcing the beginning of the day. Vinicius still knelt, thinking only of Christ and not hearing or seeing what was happening around him. He was carried away by his ecstasy to the very portals of Heaven.

# CHAPTER XXV.

Petronius, after the freeing of Lygia, not wishing to irritate Caesar, followed him together with other Augustians to the Palatine. He wanted to hear what they would say there, and especially convince himself whether Tygellinus would not contrive something new to destroy Lygia. She and Ursus, it is true, were as if under the protection of the people, and without causing riots, no one could raise his hand against them, but Petronius, being aware of the hatred which the all-powerful pretorian prefect cherished against, him, supposed that the latter probably, not being able to reach him, will yet try to wreak his vengance upon his, nephew by any means.

Nero was angry and irritated, for the spectacle ended altogether differently from what he wished. He did not even wish to look at Petronius at first, but Petronius, not losing.

his cool bearing, approached him with all the ease of the

"arbiter elegantiarum" and said:

"Dost thou know-, godlike, what comes to my mind? Write a song of a maiden, who by the order of the world-,, ruler is untied from the horns of a wild urus and is returned to her lover. The Greeks have sensitive hearts and I am positive that such a song will enchant them."

Nero, despite all his irration, was pleased by this thought for two reasons: first, as a theme for a song, and second, because he could glorify in it himself as the magnanimous world-ruler, so he looked for a while at Petronius, and then

said:

"Yes! maybe thou art right. But does it become me

to celebrate my own goodness?"

, 'Thou dost not need to mention thyself. Everybody in Borne will guess anyway what it meant, and from Rome news spread to the whole world."

"And art thou sure that this will please them in Achaea?"

"By Pollux!" said Petronius.

And he went away satisfied, for he was certain now that Nero, whose entire life was an adaptation of the reality to literary ideas, will not wish to spoil his theme, and by the same will bind the hands of Tygellinus. • This however did not not change in him his intention of sending-Vinicius away from Rome as soon as Lygia's health should cease to be an obstacle. Therefore, seeing him on the following, day he said:

'Take her to Sicily. Something happened that, although nothing threatens you from Caesar, Tygellinus will not hesitate to use a poison, even if not out of hatred to you, then out of hatred to me."

Vinicius smiled to this and answered:

'She was upon the horns of a wild urus, yet Christ saved her."

"Then honor Him with a chosen ox," answered Petronius with some impatience, but do not desire Him to save her a second time. Dost thou remember, how Aeolus received Odysseus, when he returned to again beg of him a favorable supply of winds? The deities do not like to repeat themselves."

"When health will return to her," answered Vinicius, "I shall take her to Pomponia Graecina."

"And thou wilt be all the more right doing this as Pomponia is lying sick. Antistius, a relative bf Anluses, toldme of it. Here in the meantime such things will happen that people will forget you, and in these times those forgotten are the happiest. May fortune be to you a sun in winter and shade in summer!"

Having said this he left Vinicius to his happiness, himself going to see Theocles about the health and life of Lygia.

But no danger menaced her. In the undergrounds, exhausted by the prison-fever, she would be killed by the foul air and discomforts, but now she was surrounded by the most tender care and not only plenty, but magnificence. By order of Theocles, after two days had passed they began to carry her out to the gardens surrounding the villa, in which she remained for many hours. Vinicius dressed her litter with anemones, and especially with irises, in order to remind her of the atrium in the house of Aulu. More than once hidden in the shade of far-spreading trees, they conversed, holding each others hands, of former sufferings and former terrors. Lygia said to him that Christ purposely led him through tortures in order to change his soul and raise it up to Him, while Vinicius felt that this was true, and nothing remained in him of the former partrician, who did not recognize any law save his own desires. But in these recollections there was no bitterness. To both it seemed that whole years rolled over their heads and that the terrible past was left far behind them. Meanwhile, such peacefulness was seizing them as they never had felt before. Some new life immensely blissful, was commencing in them. Caesar could rage in Rome and fill the world with terror, but they, feeling above themselves a protection a hundred-fold more powerful, did not fear his malice or his madness, as if Caesar had ceased to be the lord of their life and death. Once at sunset, they heard the roars of lions and other wild beasts coming from the direction of the distant vivaria. Formerly these sounds filled Vinicius with terror as a bad omen. Now they only looked at each other with a smile, and then raised their eyes to the evening dawn. At times Lygia, being still very weak and not able to walk unassisted, fell asleep in the silence of the gardens, while he watched over her, and looking at her sleeping face, lie thought involuntarily that this is no. more that Lygia whom he met at Aulus. In fact the prison.

and the disease partly extinguished her beauty. When he used to see her in the house of Aulus, and afterwards when he came to Myriam's house to carry her off, she was wonderful, like a statue and a flower at the same time; now her face became almost transparent, her hands grew thin, her body exhausted by the disease, her lips became pale and even the eyes seemed less blue than before. The golden haired Eunice who brought her flowers and precious stuffs to cover her feet, seemed a Cyprian goddess beside her. The esthetic Petrouius tried in vain to find the former charms in her, and shrugging his shoulders, he thought at heart that that shadow from Elysian fields was not worthy of those efforts, those sufferings and tortures, which came near sucking away Vinicius, life. But Vinicius, who loved her soul now, loved her all the more, and as he watched over her sleeping, it seemed to him that he was watching over the whole world.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The news of the miraculous preservation of Lygia spread quickly among the wrecks of the Christians who escaped death. The confessors began, to assemble, in order to see the one over whom the favor of Christ was openly performed. First came the young Nazarius with Myriam, at whose house Peter the Apostle was hiding, and others followed them. All, together with Vinicius, Lygia, and the Christian slaves of Petronius, were listening attentively to a narrative of Ursus about the Voice which sounded in his soul and commanded him to fight the wild beast, and all went away with -confidence and hope that Christ will not permit the extermination of all His confessors before He will come to the terrible judgment himself. And that hope sustained their hearts, for the persecution had not yet ceased. Whoever was accused by the public voice of being a Christian, was instantly taken by the city vigils to the prison. True, there were less victims, for most of the confessors were seized and killed already, while those remaining either left Rome to wait in the distant provinces for the storm to pass, or concealed themselves most carefully, not daring to assemble for common prayers save in "arenarise" lying beyond the city.

However, they were tracked, and though the spectacles proper were already finished, the Christians were kept for the coining ones or were punished at once. Although Roman people did not believe that the Christians were the authors of the conflagration, still they were proclaimed to be the enemies of the human race and of the empire, and the decree against them lasted continually in its former strength.

Peter the Apostle for along time dared not to show himself in the house of Petronius, but at last, on a certain evening, Nazarius announced his arrival. Lygia, who now walked unassisted, and Vinicius ran out to meet him and began to embrace his feet, while he greeted them with emotion, all the greater as not many sheep remained in the flock the Tule over which Christ had given him and over the fate of which his great heart was now weeping. So, when Vinicius said to him: "Master, because of thy intervention the Saviour returned her to me," he answered: "Hereturned her to thee because of thy belief, and in order that all the lips confessing His name should not become silent." And evidently he thought then of those thousands of his children torn by the wild beasts, of those crosses with which the' arenas were studded, and of those fiery posts in the gardens of .the "Beast," for he spoke of this with great sorrow. Vinicius and Lygia noticed that his hair had become entirely white, liis whole figure was bent, and in his face was depicted so much sorrow and suffering, as if he had passed all those pains and torture, which were endured by the victims of Nero's rage and madness. But both understood that if Christ had given Himself up to torture and death, no one can swerve from it. Still their hearts grieved at the sight of the Apostle, pressed by the burden of years, labor and pain. Therefore Vinicius, who in a few days intended to take Lygia to Neapolis, where they should meet Pomponia and go farther, to Sicily, began to beg him to leave Rome together with them.

But the Apostle placed his hand upon Vinicius' head and answered:

'I hear in my soul the words of the Lord, who at the Tiberian lake said to me: 'When young, thou hast girdled thyself and hast walked wherever thou wouldst, but when thou wilt grow old, thou wilt extend thy hands, and another will girdle thee and lead thee whither thou dost not want,'

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Therefore it is right that I should follow my flock."

And when they grew silent, not understanding what he said, he added:

' 'My labor is nearing the end, but only in the house of the

Lord shall I find hospitality and rest."

Then he turned towards them saying: "Remember me, for I love you like a father loves his children, and whatever you shall do in your life do it for the glory of the Lord."

Saying this he raised his trembling hands and blessed them, while they clung close to him, feeling that this, might

be the last blessing that they will receive from his hands.

But it was destined, however, that they should see him once more. A few days later Petronius brought menacing news from Palatine. It was discovered there that one of . Caesar's freedman was a Christian, and on him were found letters from the Apostles Peter and Paul of Tarsus, together with letters of Jacob, Judas and John. The existence of Peter in Rome was known already to Tygellinus, but he judged that Peter perished with the thousands of other confessors. Now it was discovered that both the leaders of the: new faith were yet alive and that they were in the capital, so it was determined to find out and seize them at any cost, for it was supposed that only with their death the last roots of the hateful sect would be pulled out. Petronius learned from Vestinus that Caesar himself issued a decree that in three days Peter and Paul of Tarsus should be in the Mamertinian prison, and that whole detachments of pretorians were dispatched to search every house in the Trans-Tiber.

Vinicius, hearing this, decided to go and warn the Apostle. In the evening he and Ursus, taking Gallic cloaks, which covered their faces, went to Myriam's house, where Peter stayed, located on the very edge of the Trans-Tiberian part of the city at the foot of the Janiculian hill. On the way they saw houses surrounded by soldiers, which were led by some unknown men. This division of the city was disturbed, and here and there crowds of curious gathered. Here and there the centurions examined captured prisoners,

asking them about Peter Simeon and Paul of Tarsus.

Ursus and Vinicius, outwalking the soldiers, reached Myriaba's house, in which they found Peter surrounded by a handful of faithful. Timoteus, assistant of Paul of Tarsus, and Linus were also at the side of the Apostle.

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At the news of the near danger Nazarius led all out through a hidden passage to the garden gate, and then to the deserted stone quarries a few hundred steps distant from the Janieulian gate. Ursus had to carry Linus, whose bones, broken in the tortures, had not yet grown together. Once, however, in the underground they felt safe, and by the light of a torch kindled by Nazarius, they began a consultation in a low tone how to save the life of the Apostle so dear to them.

"Master," said Vinicius to him, "may Nazarius lead thee to-morrow at daybreak toward the Albanian Hills. There we shall find thee and take thee to Ancium, where a vessel is waiting to take us both to Neapolis and Sicily. Happy shall be the day and the hour in which thou wilt-enter into my house and wilt bless my hearth."

Others listened joyfully to him and urged the Apostle,

saying:

Rome. Preserve the living truth that it should not perish together with us and with thee. Listen to us, who entreat thee, as our father."

"Do this in the name of Christi" cried others clinging to

his garments.

But he answered:

'1 Children of mine! Who knows when the end of his life

is fixed by the Lord?"

But he said that he shall not leave Rome, and he hesitated himself what to do for a long time; uncertainty and even fear had stolen themselves into his soul. But his flock was scattered, his work destroyed, the church, which before the fire of the city he brought up like a splendid tree, was turned to dust by the power of the "Beast." Nothing remained save tears—nothing save tortures and death. The sowing yielded an abundant harvest, but the Satan had trampled it into the earth. Troops of angels came not to help the perishing, and now Nero presides in glory over the whole world; terrible, more powerful than ever, the lord of all seas and all lands. More than once God's fisherman extended his hands toward the heavens in solitude and asked: "Lord! what am I to do? How shall I resist; and how shall I, a weak old man, fight with this inexhausaible power of evil which Thou hast permitted to rule and to conquer?"

And lie called so from the depth of his immense suffering. repeating in his soul: 11 There are no more of those sheep which Thou hast commanded me to feed. Thy church is no more—emptiness and mourning are in Thy capital. Then what wilt Thou command me now? Have I to remain here, or to lead out the remaining flock to glorify Thy name somewhere in concealment?"

And he hesitated. He believed that the living truth shall not perish and that it must conquer, but he thought at times that its time had not arrived, and should arrive only when the Lord will descend to earth m the day of the judgment in glory and power a hundred times mightier than Nero's.

Often it seemed to him that if he shall leave Rome the faithful will follow him, and then he will lead them far away to the shady groves of G-alilea, to the calm depth of the Tiberian sea, to shepherds peaceful like doves or sheep, who feed there in the midst of pepperworts and tuberoses. And an increasing desire of quietude and rest, an increased longing for the lake and Galilea, seized the heart of the fisherman, tears oftener and oftener came to the eyes of the old man.

But, when he made a choice for a moment sudden alarm and uneasiness were seizing him. How can he leave this city in which so much blood of martyrs had soaked into the earth, and where so many dying lips have given testimony to the truth? Shall he alone escape it? And what shall he answer to the Lord when he shall hear the words:

died for their belief, but thou has fled."

He passed nights and days in trouble and sorrow. Others who were torn by lions, who were nailed to crosses, who were burned in Caesar's gardens, after the moments of tortures fell asleep in the Lord, but he could not sleep and felt a, torture greater than all those devised by the executioners for the victims. The dawn was often whitening the roofs of houses, while he was yet calling from the depth of his sorrowful heart:

"Lord, why didst Thou order me to come here and found

Thy capital in this nest of the 'Beast.'"

For thirty-four years from the time of his master's death he did not know any rest. With a staff in his hand ho walked around the world and related the "good news." His strength became exhausted in the journeys and toils till

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finally, when in this city, which was the head of the world, he fixed the work of his Master—it was burnt by one fiery breath of wickedness, and he saw that the fight will have to be taken up anew. And what a fight! On one side Csesar, the senate, the people, legions embracing the whole world with an iron hoop, countless towns, countless lands, a power unseen by human eye; on the other side he, so bent with age and toil that his trembling hands could barely hold the pilgrim's staff.

So at times he spoke to himself that it is not for him to cope with Rome's Caesar, and that only Christ Himself can

do this.

All these thoughts passed through? his care-worn head when he listened to the entreaties of the last handful of his faithful, while they, surrounding him closer and closer, were repeating with imploring voices:

"Hide thyself, Rabbi, and lead us out from under the

power of the 'Beast.'"

Finally Linus also bowed his tortured head before him.

"Master!" he spoke, "the Saviour has commanded thee to feed His sheep, but they are not here any more, or will they be here to-morrow, so go there where thou canst find them. For God's word lives yet in Jerusalem, and in Antiochia, and in Efesus and in other towns. What wilt thou obtain remaining in Rome? If thou wilt fall thou wilt only increase the triumph of the <sup>1</sup> Beast. The Lord has not fixed an end to John's life; Paul is a Roman citizen and without a trial they can not punish him, but if the hell-power will rage over thee, 0 teacher, then those who are disheartened will ask: 'Whois above Nero?' Thou art the rock upon which God's church is built. Let us die, but do not permit a victory of anti-Christ over the vicar of God, and do not return here till the Lord shall crush the one who spilled innocent blood."

<sup>11</sup> Look at our tears! "repeated all those present.

Tears also flowed down Peter's face. In a while, however, he arose, and extending his hands over the kneeling, he said:

'1 May the name of Lord be worsihpped and may His will be done!"

### CHAPTER XXVII.

At dawn on the following morning two dark figures advanced by, the Appian Way towards the plains of Campania.

One of them was Nazarius, the other Peter the Apostle, who was leaving Rome and his tortured fellow confessor's in it.

The. sky in the east was already assuming a slight green hue, which changed gradually into a saffran color. Silverleafed trees, the white marbles of the villas and the arches of the viaducts, running town-wards over the plain, emerged from the shadow. Gradually the green color of the sky became lighter. Then the east began to appear red and and lighted the Albanian Mountains, which appeared lilycolored and composed as if from gleams only.

The dawn was reflected in the dew-drops trembling upon the leaves of trees. The mist was disappearing, the view upon the plain, the houses, the cemeteries, towns and tufts of trees, between which were visible the pillars of the temples.

The road was empty. The peasants who were bringing vegetables to the city, evidently had not hitched their carts yet. From the stone slabs with which the road was paved up to the mountains, the sound of wooden shoes, which the travelers had on disturbed the quietude.

Then the sun appeared through an opening between the monntains, but at the same time a wonderful sight struck the eyes of the Apostle. For it seemed to him that the golden disk, instead of rising higher and higher in the sky, glided down the hills and moved along on the road.

Then Peter halted and said:

"Dost thou see the brightness which is approaching us?" "I see nothing." answered Nazarius.

But Peter in a while said, shading his eyes with his hand, "Some figure is walking in the sun-gleam toward us."

To their ears however, came not the least sound of steps. Quiet reigned all around them. Nazarius saw only that in the distance the trees were trembling, as if somebody was shaking them, and that light was spreading wider and wider on the plain.

And he looked at the Apostle with amazement.

"Rabbi! what is the matter with thee?" he cried with,

And the staff fell from Peter's hands, his eyes looked forward, his lips were open, in his face astonishment, joy, admiration and ecstasy were expressed.

Suddenly he threw himself down upon his knees with his arms stretched forward, while from his lips escaped a shout:

"Christi! Christi!"

And he neared his face to the earth as if he kissed some one's feet.

The silence reigned long, then in the stillness were heard the words of the old man interrupted by sobbing:

"Quo vadis, Domine?"

And Nazarius did not hear the answer, but to the ears of Peter came a sad and sweet voice, which said:

"If thou desertest my people, I am going to Rome that

they should crucify me the second time."

The Apostle was lying on the ground with his face in the dust, motionless and speechless. To Nazarius it seemed that he fainted or died, but he finally arose, took the staff with his trembling hands, and without speaking, he turned towards the seven hills of the city.

The boy seeing this, repeated like an echo:

"Quo vadis, Domine?"

'To Rome," answered the Apostle in a low voice. And he returned

Paul, John, Linus and all the faithful received him with amazement and with greater fear, for just at daybreak, immediately after his departure, the pretorians surrounded Myaiam's house and searched for the Apostle in it. But he answered to all their questions with happiness and peace:

"I saw the Lord!"

And the same evening he betook himself to the Ostrianum cemetery, to teach and baptize those who wished to bathe in the water of life.

And he went there daily, and more and more numerous crowds followed him. It seemed that from every martyr's tear new confessors were born and that every groan on the arena resounded with an echo in thousands of breasts. Caesar bathed in blood, Rome and the whole pagan world was raging. But those who had enough of crime and madness; those, who were trampled upon, those whose life was a life of misery and oppression, all those abused, all those sad, all unfortuates came to listen to the wonderful tale of a God

who, out of love for men, permitted Himself to be crucified, and redeemed their sins.

And finding a God whom they could love, they found that which nobody had received in the world till then: happiness from love.

Peter understood that neither Caesar nor all his legions could conquer the living truth, that neither tears nor blood could drown it, and that only now its victory begins. He understood also, why the Lord turned him back from the road: for that city of pride, crime, dissolution and power was beginning to be His city and a double capital, from which the government of bodies and souls flowed upon the world.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

And finally the hour of both Apostles had come. But, as if in conclusion of the service, it was given to God's fisherman to win two souls even in the prison. The soldiers, Processus and Martinianus, who guarded him in the Mamertinian prison, accepted the baptism. Then the hour of torture arrived. Nero was absent from Rome at that time. The decree was issued by Helius and Politetes, two freedmen, whom Csesar had intrusted with the government of Rome during the time of his absence. The aged Apostle was first subjected to a flogging prescribed by the law, and on the following day he was led out beyond the city walls, where he was to suffer the punishment by a cross intended for him. The soldiers were astonished by the crowds which collected before the prison, for in their understanding, the death of a simple man, and a foreigner in addition, was not supposed to create such interest, but they did not understand that that procession was not composed of curious, but of confessors wishing to accompany the Great Apostle to the place of execution. At last, in the afternoon, the prison gates opened and Peter appeared in the midst of a detachment of pretorians. The sun had descended a trifle towards Ostia, the day was calm and clear. Peter, out of consideration for his venerable age, was not ordered to carry the cross, for they judged that he would not be able to raise it, neither did they put a fork around his neck, so as render his march more difficult. He walked freely and the faithful could see him perfectly. In the moment when his white head appeared among theiron helmets of the soldiers, weeping was heard in the crowd, but almost instantly it ceased, for the face of the aged man had so much sereneness in it, and gleamed with such happiness, that all understood that this is not a victim going to be executed, but a conqueror is accomplishing his triumphal march.

And so it was. The fisherman, usually submissive and bent down, now walked erect, his stature taller than that of the soldiers, and full of dignity. Never was so much majesty seen in his attitude. It might have seemed that he was a monarch, who advances surrounded by the people and soldiers. Voices sounded in all directions: "Behold Peter going to the Lord." All, it seemed, had forgotten that torture and death were awaiting him. They walked in solemn attention but in peace, feeling that since the death on Golgotha till now, nothing as great had happened, and that, like the One who redeemed the whole world, so this one is redeeming this city.

On the way people stopped, astonished at the sight of the aged man, while the confessors, placing their hands upon their shoulders, said with calm voices: "Look, how a just man dies, who knew Christ and proclaimed love to the world." And the others fell into meditation, then walked away, saying to themselves: "Indeed, this one could not be

unjust!"

On the way the shouts and cries of the streets were hushed down. The procession advanced between houses newly built, among the white columns of the temples over the roofs of which hung the deep blue sky. They walked in silence; at times only the armors of the soldiers jingled or the murmur of prayers arose. Peter listened to them and his face was brightened up with increasing joy, for his eyes could barely see those thousandsof confessors. He felt that he had accomplished his work and he knew that that truth, which he was proclaiming during all his life, will flood everything like a wave, and that nothing can stop it now. And, thinking thus, he raised his eyes upwards and spoke: "Lord, Thou hast commanded me to conquer this city, which rules over the world, so I have conquered it. Thou hast

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commanded me to found Thy capital in it, so I have founded it. It is Thy city now, Lord, and I come to Thee, for

have worked very hard."

And passing in front of temples he spoke to them: "You shall be temples of Christ." Looking at the swarms of people passing before his eyes he spoke to them: "Your children shall be the servants of Christ," and he walked with a conscience of an accomplished conquest, aware of his service, aware of his power, soothed and great. The soldiers led him through the Triumphal Bridge, as if involuntarily giving testimony to his triumph, and conducted him toward Naumachia and the Circus. The faithful of the Trans-Tiber joined the procession, and such a throng of people was formed that the centurion commanding the pretorians, understanding at last that he was conducting some high priest, whom the faithful surrounded, became uneasy because of the small number of the soldiers. But not a single shout of indignation or rage was heard in the crowd. Faces were impressed by the greatness of the moment—solemn and at the same time full of expectation, for some confessors, remembering that at the Lord's death the earth opened from fear and the dead were raised from their graves, thought that, perhaps now, also, will the visible signs appear by which the . death of the Apostle will not be obliterated for ages. Others spoke to themselves, "Perhaps the Lord will choose Peter's hour to descend from heaven, as He promised, and hold the judgment over the world. " And in this thought they recommended themselves to the mercy of the Saviour.

But it was quiet all around. The hills seemed to warm themselves and rest in the sun. The procession stopped at last between the Circus and the Vatican Hill. The soldiers began to dig the pit, others placed on the earth the cross, hammer and nails, waiting till the preparations would be ended, while the crowd, always quiet and attentive, knelt,

down all around.

The Apostle, his head glorified by the sun, turned to the city for the last time. In the distance, lower down, the glistening Tiber was seen; on the other side was the Field of Mars; higher yet the Mausoleum of Augustus; lower, the gigantic baths which Nero had just begun to erect; lower yet, Pompeius' theater, and behind them, visible in places and in places veiled by other buildings, Septa Julia, a multi-

tude of porticos, temples, columns, multi-storied buildings and finally, in the distance, the hills, studded with houses upon which were crowds of people. The nest of crime and-strength—of madness but also' of order, which became the head of the world, its oppressor but at the same time its laws and its peace,—all-powerful, invincible, eternal.

Peter, surrounded by the soldiers, was looking upon it as a ruler and a king looks at his heritage. And he spoke to it: "Thou art redeemed and mine." And no one, not alone the soldiers digging the pit in which the cross was to stand, but even the confessors, were not able to guess that the true ruler of this city was really standing among them and that the Caesars will pass, by, the waves of barbarians will flow, ages will pass, and that old man will rule here uninterruptedly.

The sun was lowering more toward Ostia, and grew large and red. The whole west side of the city seemed to burn with an immense gleam. The soldiers approached Peter to undress him. But he, praying, suddenly straightened himself and stretched up his right hand. The executioners halted, as if losing courage by his attitude. The faithful also held their breath, thinking that he wanted to

speak, and an unbroken silence followed.

But he, standing on an elevation, began to make the sign of the cross with his outstretched right hand, blessing in the hour of death:

"Urbi et orbi!" (The city and the world.)

And on the same beautiful evening, another detachment of soldiers conducted by the Ostian way Paul of Tarsus toward a place called Aquae Salviae. He was followed by a crowd of faithful, whom he converted, and he recognized nearer acquaintances, stopped and conversed with them, for being a Roman citizen, the guards showed more consideration to him. Passing the gate called Tergemina, he met Plautilla, the daughter of the prefect Elavius Sabinus, and seeing her young face flooded with tears, he said: "Plautilla, daughter of the eternal Salvation, return in peace. Lend me only a veil with which they will bind my eyes when I shall go to the Lord." And, taking the veil he walked on with a face full of joy, like that of a laborer who after woi-king hard the whole day, returns home. His thoughts like those of Peter, were peaceful and calm. His eyes

looked in meditation upon the plain, which was laying before him and upon the Albanian mountains, immersed in light. He was remembering his journeys, 'his toils and work, the battles in which he conquered, and the churches which he founded in all lands and beyond every sea, and he thought that he had earned the rest. He also accomplished his work. He felt that his sowing shall not be scattered by the wind of wickedness. He was departing with this certainty, that in the struggle which was declared to the world by his truth,—it shall 'conquer, and an immense serenity decended to his soul.

The road to the place of execution was long and the evening began to near. The mountains became purple while their bases were slowly entering the shade. The herds were returning home. Here and there walked crowds of slaves with working tools on their shoulder. In front of the houses along the road children were playing, looking curiously at the detachment of soldiers passing by. And in this evening, in this transparent golden air were not only calmness and assuagement but a certain harmony, which seemed to rise from earth to heaven. And Paul heard it and his heart was filled with joy at the thought that to that music of the world he added one sound, which did not exist hitherto, and without which the whole earth was like jingling brass and cymbal.

And he remembered, how he taught love to people, how he said to them, that though giving all their riches to the poor, and though acquiring all languages and all mysteries and all sciences they would be nothing without love, which is kind, patient, which does not perform evil, does not desire honors, bears all, believes all, confides in all, endures all.

And so his life passed in teaching people such truth; and now he said to himself in his soul: what strength can equal it and what can conquer it? How can Csesar suppress it, even had he twice as many legions, twice as many cities and seas and lands and nations?

And now he was going for his renumeration like a victor.

The procession at last left the high-way and turned east-wards through a narrow path to the Salvian Waters. The red sun appeared lying behind the heaths.. Near the spring-well the centurion stopped the soldiers, for the moment ha larrived.

But Paul raised his eyes for the last time, full of great peace, toward the eternal evening gleams and he prayed. Yes! the moment had arrived, but he saw before him a great road «of lights leading toward heaven, and in his sold he spoke to himself the same words which he formerly wrote, in the feeling of his accomplished service and his near end. 'I have struggled for a good cause, I have kept my faith, I have acomplished my purpose, and the wreath of justice is intended for me and the termination."

### CHAPTER XXIX.

A nd Rome raged as before, so that it seemed as if this city which conquered the world, began at last for lack of leaders to destroy itself. Before the last wordly hours struck for the Apostles, the conspiracy of Piso took place, and it was followed by such a merciless mowing of the highest heads in Rome, that even to those who saw a divinity in Nero, he seemed at last a divinity of death. Mourning fell upon the city, terror seized houses and hearts, but the porticos were wreathed with ivy and flowers, for it was not permitted to show mourning after the dead. People awakening in the morning asked themselves whose turn would come to-day. The procession of ghosts following Caesar increased every day.

Piso paid for the conspiracy with his head, and following him were Seneca and Lucan, Fenius Rufus and Plaucius Lateranus and Flavius Scevinus and Afranius Quinecianus and the dissolute companion of Caesar's madnesses, Tullius Senecio and Proculus and Araricus and Tugurinus and Gratus and Silanus and Proximus and Subrius Flavius, at one time devoted to Nero with his whole soul, and Sulpicius Asper. Some perished through their own villany, some through fear, some through riches, and some by valiancy. Caesar, terrified bj' the number of conspirators, covered the walls with soldiery and held the city as if in a siege, sending centurions every day with decrees of death to suspected houses. The condemned cringed in letters, full of flatteries, thanking Caesar for the decree, and leaving him a part of their property, in order to save the rest of the children. At

last it seemed that Nero exceeded the measure intentionally,, in order to convince himself to what degree the people grow mean and how long they will endure this bloody government. Following the conspirators their relatives were executed, their friends and even their acquaintances. The inhabitants of the magnificent houses, erected after the conflagration, were certain that going out on the street they will see whole rows of funerals. Pompejus, Cornelius, Martialis, Flavius Nepos and Statius Domitius perished accused of want of love for Cossar; Nobius Priscus, as a friend of Seneca; Rufius Crispus was deprived of the right of fire and water because he was once Poppeae's husband. The great Traseas was ruined by his virtue, many paid with their life for their noble descent, even Poppea fell a victim of a momentary anger of Cossar.

And the Senate cringed before the terrible ruler, erected temples in his honor, made votive offerings for his voice, crowned his statues, and appointed priests to him as if to a deity. The Senators with trembling in their soul were going to the Palatines, to glorify the song of the "Periodonices," and to rave with him in midst of orgies of naked bodies.

wine and flowers.

And meanwhile from below, on the soil saturated with blood and tears, the sowing of Peter was raising quietly but mightier and mightier.

# CHAPTER XXX.

Vinicius to Petronius:

"We know here too, Carissime, what is going on in Rome, and what we don't know—thy letters are telling us; If thou throwest a stone in water, the waves spread farther and farther around, and such a wave of madness and wickedness came even to us from the Palatinus. On the road to Greece, Carinas, who plundered cities and temples to fill the empty treasury, was sent here by Caesar. At the cost of human sweat and tears the 'domus aurea' is being erected now in Rome. It may be that the world has not seen such a temple before, but it has not seen such wrongs, either. For thou, knowest Carinas. Chilo was like him till with his death he

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redeemed his life. But to the towns lying in our neighborhood his men did not come, perhaps because there are no temples nor treasures in them. Thou askest whether we are safe? I shall answer thee only that we are forgotten, and may this suffice thee for an answer. At this moment from the porticus under which I write I see our quiet bay, and upon it Ursus in a boat, dropping down a net in the bright depths. My wife spins red wool at my side, and in the gardens under the shade of mindal-trees our slaves are singing. OI what a peace, Carissime, and what an oblivion of former fears and suffering. But not the Parcae, as thou writest, are spinning the thread of our lives so sweetly,—that is 'Christ blessing us, our beloved God and Saviour. We know sorrow and tears, for our truth commands us to weep over the misery of others, but even in those tears there is a solace unknown to you, that, sometime, when our life is ended, we shall find all those dear ones who perished and are to perish for the teaching of God. To us Peter and Paul did not die, but were, born in glory. Our souls see them, and, while the eyes are weeping, our hearts are filled with joy. 0 yes, dear, we are happy with a happiness which nothing can destroy, for the death, which to you is the end of everything, to us will be only a passage to greater peace, greater love,

and greater joy.

"And thus days and months goby in calmness. Our servants and slaves believe in Christ, like we do, and as He commanded love, so we love all. Often, when the sun is setting, or when the moon glistens on the water, I converse with Lygia of former times, which to-day seem a dream to us, and when I think that this dear head, which now I lull upon my breast, was near torture and death, I glorify my Lord with all my soul, for He alone could snatch her from those hands, save her from the arena, and give her back to me forever. 0, Petronius, thou hast seen what consolation and endurance in misery this teaching gives, what patience and courage in presence of death, so come and see what happiness it gives in ordinary life. The people, thou seest, did not know God till now, whom they could love, therefore they did not love one another, and hence their misery, for, like light from the sun, so happiness comes from love. Neither law-givers nor philosophers taught them this truth,' and it was neither in Greece nor in Rome, and when I say, nor in 514 OUO VADIS

Rome, it means on the whole earth. The dry and coldteaching of the stoics, to -which the virtuous men gather themselves, tempers the hearts like swords, but it makes them indifferent rather than better. But why do I tell this to thee, who hast learned more and understandest more than 1? Thou hast also known Paul of Tarsus and frequently hast conversed with him for a long time, so thou knowest Best, whether against the truth, which he related, all the teachings of your philosophers and retors are not vain bubbles and an empty jingle of words without meaning. Dost thou remember the question which he asked of thee: "And if Caesar were a Christian, would not you feel safer, more certain of holding what you possess, devoid of fears and sure of to-morrow?" But thou hast told me that our truth is an enemy of life, but I answer thee now, that were I to repeat from the beginning of this letter only three words; "I am happy!"—still I could notexpress my happiness to thee. Thou wilt tell me that Lygia is my happiness! Yes! Because I love her immortal soul, and that both of us are enamored in Christ, and in such love there are neither separations, treacheries, changes, old age.—nor death. For, when the youth and beauty pass, when the bodies and souls wither and death arrives, this love will remain, for the souls will remain. Before my eyes opened to the light, I was ready to incend my own house for Lygia,—but now I tell thee: I did not love her, for Christ alone taught me to love. He is a fountain of happiness and peace. It is not I who speaks but the reality itself. Compare your delights lined with fear, your intoxications uncertain of to-morrow, your orgies like

funeral feasts,—with the life of Christians, and thou wilt find a ready answer. But in order to compare better, come to our mountains fragrant with pepper-wort, to our shad}' olive-groves, to our shores covered with ivy. A peace awaits thee here, such as thou hast not known for a long time, and hearts which love thee truly. Thou, having a noble and good soul, ought to be happy. Thy sharp mind will be able to distinguish the truth, and when thou wilt learn to know it, thou wilt love it, for perhaps one could be its enemy, like Caesar or Tygellinus, but no one like you can be indifferent to it. 0, my Petronius, with Lygia, we console ourselves with the hope to see thee soon. Be healthy,

happy, and come."

Petronius received Vinicius' letter in Curare, where he went together with other Augustians, following Caesar.: His struggle of many years with Tygellinus was nearing its end. Petronius knew already that he had to fall, and he understood the reasons for this. As Caesar was falling lower and lower to a character of a comedian, buffoon, and a charioteer, as he was sinking more and more in the sickly, foul and coarse dissolution, so the exquisite "arbiter elegantiarum." burden to him. When Petronius was silent,. Nero saw a rebuke in his silence; even when he praised— Nero saw jeering. The magnificent patrician irritated his self-love and awakened jealousy. His riches and his magnificent works of art became the objects of desire for the ruler and the all-powerful minister. Till now he was spared, out of consideration for the departure to Achrea, in whichi his taste and his knowledge of Greek customs might be of use. But gradually Tygellinus began to explain to Caesar, that Carinas surpasses even Petronius in taste and knowledge, and that he will know better than Petronius how to arrange games, receptions and triumphs in Achrea. From this moment Petronius was lost. They did not dare, however, to send him a decree in Rome. Cresar and Tygellinus remembered that this seemingly effeminate, esthetic man, 1 'making a day out of night," occupied with pleasure, art and feasts only, when he was proconsul in Bithynia and afterwards a consul in the capital, showed an astonishing diligence and energy. He was considered capable of everything, and he was known to possess in Rome the love not only of the people but also of the pretorians. None of Caesar's sycophants knew how Petronius would act in this case, so it seemed more discreet to lure him out of the city and reach him only in the province.

To this purpose he received an invitation to come to Cumae together with other Augustians, and he, though guessing the strategem, departed, perhaps in order not to oppose openly, or perhaps to show once more to Cresar and the Augustians a joyful face devoid of all cares and gain his last victory

before death over Tygellinus.

Meanwhile the latter accused him of his friendship with Senator Scevinus, who was the soul of Piso's conspiracy. The people of Petronius left in Rome were imprisoned, and his house was surrounded with the Pretorian guard. But he, learning this, showed neither fear, not even uneasiness, and with a smile he said to the Augnstians whom he entertained in his own splendid villa in Cumee.

"Ohenobarbus does not like direct questions and you shall see how confused he will be when I ask him whether it was jby his order that my 'family" was imprisoned."

Then he announced to them a feast "before further journey," and he was just making preparation for it, when the letter of Vinicius arrived.

Petronius, having received it, after a short meditation his face shone with its usual brightness, and in the evening

of the same day he answered as follows:

"I am delight at your happiness and I admire your hearts, carissime, for I did not suppose that two lovers could remember a third distannt person. You, however, not only thought of me, but you wish to persuade me to come to Sicily to share with me your bread and your Christ, who, as

thou writest, gives you your happiness.

If that is so, then honor him. I think Marcus that Lygia was returned to thee partly by Ursus, a little too by the Roman people. Were Caesar a different man, I would think that they give up further persecution out of the consideration for thy relation with him through the grand daughter who, at the proper time, was given by Tiberius to one of the Viniciuses. But if thou supposest that it was Christ, I will not dispute with thee; Yes! spare no offerings to him! Prometheus also sacrificed himself for men, bu talas! Apparently Prometheus is only a contrivance of poets, while trustworthy people told me that they have seen Christ with their own eyes. Together with you I think that he is the most honest of all gods.

I remember the question of Paul of Tarsus and I agree that if, for instance, Ahenobarbus lived in accordance with the teachings of Christ, I might have time to come to you to Sicily. Then in the shade of the trees at the fountains, we would converse about all the gods and all the truths like the Greek philosophers did some time ago. To-day I must

•give thee a short answer.

I want to know two philosophers only, one is called Pirron, the other Anacreon. The rest I can sell thee cheap together with the whole school of Greek and our stoics. The truth lives somewhere so high that the gods themselves cannot see

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it from the summits of the Olympus. To thee, carissime, it. seems that your Olympus is higher yet, and, standing upon it, thou callest to me: "Ascend, and thou wilt see such sights as thou hast not seen before!" May be! But I answer thee: "Friend I have no legs!" And when thou wilt read this to the end, thou will confess I think, that I am right.

No! happy husband of the queen of the morning! Your teaching is not for me. Shall 1 then love the Bithy, who carry my litter, the Egyptians who heat my baths, Ahenobarbus and Tygellinus? By the white knees of the Graces, I swear to thee, that even if I wanted to I could not. lucre are at least one hundred thousand men in Rome, who have either crooked shoulder-blades, or thick, knees, or dried up calves, or round eyes, or yet too large heads. Dost thou command me to love them too? Where shall I find that love if I do not feel it in my heart? and if your god wishes me to love them all, why in his all powerfullness he did not give them shapes as for instance the-Niobes, whom thou hast seen in the Palatines? Whoever loves beauty, cannot for this very reason love ugliness. It is a different thing not to believe in our gods, but it is possible to love them as Fidias, and Praxiteles, and Miron, and Scopas. and Lisias did.

Had I even desired to go whither thou leadst me, I cannot. And as I do not desire, I cannot. Thon believest like Paul of Tarsus, that sometime on the other side of the styx on some Elysian fields you shall see your Christ. Well! Let him tell thee then whether he would accept me with my gems, my myrrhian vase, with the editions of Soziuses, and with my golden-haired Eunice. At the thought of this-I have to laugh, my dear, for even Pa,ul of Tarus said to me that for Christ one has to forsake the rose-wreaths, feasts and pleasures. It is is true, he promised another happiness to me, but I answered him, as for that other one I am tooold and that my eyes will always enjoy the sight of roses, and that the fragrance of violets will be always more pleasant to me than the odor of a dirty fellow-man from the Subura.

These are the reasons for which your happiness is not for me. But there is besides still one, which I have preserved for the last. Tanates calls me. For you the dawn of life is begining, but for me the sun has gone down and darkness surrounds my head. In other words, I have to die, •carissime.

It is not worth while to talk of this long. It had to end thus. Thou, who knowest Ahenobarbus, will understand it easily. Tygellinus conquered me, or rather not I Those are only my victories which reached their end. I lived as I wanted and I shall die as I please.

Do not take this to heart. No God ever promised me immortality, so that nothing unexpected befalls me. And then besides, thou art mistaken, Vinicius, asserting, that your Deity only teaches to die peacefully. No. Our world knew before you that when the last cup is emptied it is time to depart to rest, and knows how to do this calmly. Plato says, that the virtue is. a music, and the life of a sage is a harmony. If that is so, then I shall die virtuously as I have lived.

1 would like to bid farwell to thy divine wife in words with which I greeted her once in the house of Auluses:

"Different and various nations have I seen, but I do not know the like of thee."

And if the soul is something more than Pirson thinks, then mine shall come to your on the way to the edges of the Océanos, and shall rest at your house in the form of a butterfly, or as the Egyptians believe, of a sparrow hawk. Otherwise I cannot come.

And meanwhile may Sicily change into the garden of Hesperides to you, may the field, forest, and fountain goddesses sprinkle flowers upon your way, and may white doves nest themselves in all acanthuses and columns of your house."

# CHAPTER XXXI.

In fact, Petronius was not mistaken. Two days later the young Nerva, always an admirer land devotee of Petronius, sent his freedman to Cumae with news of all that was taking place at Caesar's court.

The ruin of Petronius had already been decided. On the collowing evening they intended to send a centurion to him

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with the order to stay in Cumas and wait there for further instructions. The next messenger, to be dispatched a few days later, was to bring him a decree of death.

Petronius heard the news of the freedman with calmness,

and he said:

"Thou wilt take to thy master one of my vases, which I shall give to thee before thy departure. Tell him for me, that I thank him with all my heart, for in this way I shall: be able to anticipate the decree."

And he immediately began to laugh, like a man, who, coming to a perfect thought, enjoys in advance its execu-

tion.

On the same evening his slaves dispersed, inviting all Augustians staying in Cumae and all Augustian ladies to a feast in the magnificent villa of the "arbiter elegantiarum."

Petronius wrote for several hours in his library, during the afternoon, then he took a bath, after which he ordered' the vestiplicae to dress him, and splendid, lustrous, like a god, he descended to the triclinium, in order to cast the eye-of a connoisseur upon the preparations, and then he proceeded to the gardens, where boys and young Greek girls-from the islands were weaving wreaths from roses for the-feast.

Upon his face not the slightest care could be discerned. That the feast would be something extraordinary the servants knew only from the fact that he ordered unusual rewards to be given to those who satisfied him, and a light flogging to all whose work displeased him, or who before deserved a rebuke or a punishment. He ordered the citherplayers and singers to be-paid liberally in advance,, and at last, taking a seat in the garden, under a beech tree, through; the leaves of which penetrated the sun's rays, dotting the ground with bright spots, he summoned Eunice to him.

She came, dressed in white, with a myrtle twig in her hair,, beautiful as the Charitas, and he seated her at his side and, touching her temples with his fingers, he began to look at her with the admiration that a connoisseur looks at a divine;

statue coming from a master's chisel.

<sup>1</sup> 'Eunice,' 'he said to her, ' 'dost thou know that for a long; time thou hast not been a slave?

But she raised her quiet, blue eyes to him and began to contradict with the motion of her head.

"I am, master, always," she answered.

"But perhaps thou dost not know," continued Petronius, "that this villa and everything that is in it, and those slaves who weave wreaths there, and the fields, and the herds, belong to thee from to-day on."

Eunice, hearing this, drew away from him at once and, in a voice in which a sudden uneasiness quivered, she asked:

"Why dost thou tell me this, master?"

Then she drew near again and began to look at him, her eyes twinkling with terror. After a while her face grew pale, while he smiled continually and finally said only one word:

"Yes!"

A moment of silence followed; a slight breeze moved the beech-leaves.

Petronius could really think that he had -before him a statue chiseled out of white marble.

"Eunice," he said, "I wish to die calmly."

And the girl, looking at him with a heart-breaking look, whispered:

"I hear thee, master."

In the evening the guests, who had often attended Petromius' feasts and knew that in comparison with them even Caesar's feasts seem tiresome and barbarious, began to arrive in crowds, while to nobody's mind it came, that this should be the last "symposion." It is true, many knew that clouds of Caesar's displeasure were hanging over the exquisite arbiter, but this had happened so many times, and so many times Petronius knew how to disperse them with a single dexterous action, or with one daring word, nobody thought that a seri-

ous danger menaced him His joyful face and his usual careless smile completely strengthened them in this opinion. The beautiful Eunice, to whom he said that he wanted to die calmly, and for whom each word of his was as if a word of an oracle, had perfect peace in her godlike features and certain strange gleams in her eyes, which could be taken for happiness. In the door of the triclinium young boys with their hair in golden nets were laying wreaths of roses upon the heads of those arriving, cautioning them, following the custom, to step over the threshold with their right foot. A slight fragrance of violets pervaded the hall; lights burned in vari-colored Alexandrian glasses. At the benches stood

Greek girls, who were to moisten the feet of the guests with perfumes. Under the walls the cither players and the singers from Athens were waiting for the signal of their leader. The service of the table was glistening with splendour, but that splendour did not offend the sight nor did it weigh upon anybody, but seemed to flourish by itself. Joyfulness and freedom spread in the hall together with the fragrance of violets. The guests entering here, knew that neither compulsion nor threat would hang over them, as it would at Caesar's, where for praises not sufficiently elevated, or even not sufficiently just of his singing and verses, one could pay with his life. Instantly therefore at the sight of the lights, ivy-cups, wines becoming icy in their snow bed and exquisite meats, the hearts of the feasters became joyous. Conversations began to buzz lively, like a swarm of bees over an apple tree covered with blossoms. At times they were interrupted by an outburst of gay laughter, at times by a murmur of praise, at times too loud a kiss placed upon a white shoulder.

The guests, drinking wine, were spilling from their cupsa few drops for the immortal gods, in order to obtain their protection and their favor for their host. It did not matter that many of them did not believe in gods. Thus the custom superstition was prescribed. Petronius lying near Eunice, conversed about Roman novels, about the newest divorces, about love, about love affairs, about races, about Spiculus who grew famous of late upon the arena, and about the newest books which appeared at Atractus' aud Soziuses'. Spilling wine he said that he spilled it only in honor of the Lady of Cyprus, who is older and greater than all the gods, the immortal, lasting and ruling one.

His conversation was like a sun-ray, which continually illuminates new objects, or like a summer beeeze which moves the flowers in the garden. At last he nodded at the leader, and at this sign the cithers sounded lightly while young voices accompanied them. Then female dancers from Kos, country women of Eunice, began to glitter with their i rosy bodies from under the transparent veils. Finally an Egyptian fortune teller began to tell the guests their future from the movements of rainbow colored-fish inclosed in a crystal vessel

When they had enough of these amusements however.

Petronius rose a little on his Syrian couch and said care-

lessly:

< < Friends, pardon me, that I shall ask you for a favor at a feast, let everyone accept from me as a present that cup from which he spilled wine in honor of the gods and

too my prosperity."

the cups of Petronius glistened with gold, jewels and masterly carving, therefore, although distribution of presents was common in Pome, joy filled the, hearts of the feasters. Some began to thank him and glorify him; others said that even Jupiter himself never honored the gods in Olympus with a single gift; there were at last some who hesitated to accept, to such an extent did this surpass the usual measure.

But Petronius raised a myrrhenian goblet, like a rainbow

in splendour and simply priceless, then he said:

"And here is the one from which I spilled in honor oi the Lady of Cyprus. May nobody's lips touch it from now on and may no hands spill from it in honor of another goddess."

And he threw the costly vessel upon the floor sprinkled with lily-colored saffran flowers, and when it broke into

small pieces, he said, seeing astonished looks all around:

Dear ones, be merry instead of being astonished. Old age, decrepitude,—those are the sad companions of the last years of life. But I shall give you a good example and a good counsel: for you see it is possible not to wait for them, and before they arrive, depart voluntarily, as I depart."

"What dost thou wish to do?" asked a few voices

uneasily.

11 I wish to be merry, drink wine, listen to the music, look upon these divine forms which you see at my side, and then fall asleep with a crowned head. I took farewell of Caesar already, and do you want to listen to what I did write him?"

Saying this he took a letter from under the purple cushion

and began to read as follows:

'-I know, 0 Caesar, that thou awaitest with impatience my arrival, and that thy true heart of a friend longs days and nights for me. I know that thou wouldst cover me with gifts, intrust me with the perfect-ship of the pretoria, and ...order Tygellinus to be that for which gods created him—the

taule overseer in those of thy lands which thou hast inherited after the poisoning of Domitia. Pardon me however, for I swear to thee by Hades, and in it by the shadows of thy mother, wife, brother and Seneca, that I cannot come to thee. Life is a great treasure, my dear, and I know how to pick out the most precious jewels from that treasure, but in 'life there are also things which I cannot stand any longer. Oh, do not think, please, that I am offended because thou hast killed thy mother, and wife, and brother, that thou hast burnt Rome and hast sent to Erebus all the honest men an thy empire. No, my grandson of chromos. Death is the lot of mankind, and other actions of thee were not expected. But to, wound one's ears for whole years with thy singing, to see thy Domitian thin legs flung about in a Pyrrtian dance, to hear thy play, thy declamation and thy poems, poor poet of the suburbs—that was which surpassed my strength and awakened a desire to die. Rome stops its ears from listening to thee,/the world derides thee, and I do not wish to blush for thee any longer. I cannot. The howling <of Cerberus, my dear, even similar to thy singing, will be less trying for me, for I never was his friend, and have no duty to be ashamed for his voice. Be well, but do not sing, kill, but do not write verses, poison, but do not dance, incend, but do not play the cither, this is wished for thee and this last advice of a friend is sent to thee by the Arbiter Elegantiae."

The feasters were struck with fear, for they knew that were Nero even to lose his empire, it would be a less cruel blow for him. They understood also, that a man who wrote such a letter, must die, and at the same time a pale fear

seized them that they had listened to such a letter.

But Petronius laughed with such a sincere and merry laugh as if the most innocent joke was concerned, then he looked at those present and said:

"Be merry and repel the fear far away. No one needs to boast that he has heafd this letter, while if I boast of it, it

will be to Charon at the time of the crossing over."

Then he nodded at the Greek physician and extended his arm to him. The dexterous Greek tied it with a golden band and opened the vein at' the bending of the hand, blood spurted upon the cushion and covered Eunice, who supporting Petronius' head, inclined over him and said:

"Master, didst thou think that I would desert thee ? If the gods wanted to give me immortality, and Caesar the rule of the world yet I would follow thee."

Petronius smiled, rose a trifle, kissed her and answered: "Come with me." And then he added: "Thou hast

loved me indeed, my godlike one !"

And she stretched her rosy arm to the physician and in a short time her blood began to flow and mingle with his.

But he gave a sign to the leader, and again the cithers and the voices were heard. They first sang "Harmodius," and then the song of Anacreon was heard, in which the poet complains that he once found at his door the child of Aphrodite benumbed with cold and weeping: he took it in, warmed it up, dried its wings, but the ungrateful child pierced his heart with its arrow in reward, and ever since peace deserted him....

Petronius and Eunice, supported against each other, beautiful as two divinities, listened smilingly and grew pale. Petronius after the song was over, ordered more wine and meats to be served, and then he began to converse with those of the feasters who sat near him about insignificant but pleasant things, which were the usual objects of conversations at feasts. At last he summoned the Greek to bandage his veins for a time, for he said, that sleep was coming over him, and he wished yet to give himself up to "Hypnos," before Tanatos shall put him to sleep forever.

Indeed he fell asleep. When he awoke, the head of the girl was laying upon his breast like a white flower. Then he supported it against the cushion to look at it once more.

After this they untied his veins.

At his nod the singers began a new song of Anacreon, while the cithers accompanied them softly, so as not to deafen the words. Petronius was growing paler and paler, when however, the last sound had ceased he turned once more to the feasting and said:

"Friends, agree, that together with us perish."....

But he could not finish; with its last movement his arm embraced Eunice, then his head dropped upon the cushion and he died. And the feasters looking at those two white bodies, like two wonderful statues, understood well, that together with them perished all that was left to their world, that is its poetry and beauty.

## EPILOGUE.

At first the rebellion of the Gallic legions under the leadership of Vindex did not seem to be threatening. Csesar was only in his thirty-first year, and no one dared to think that the world was to be soon freed from the stifling nightmare. It was remembered that among the legions, in the former reigns, revolts occurred more than once, which however passed by, not causing a change of the reign. So in the reign of Tiberius, Drusus suppressed the rebellion of the Pannonian legions and Germanicus one of the legions of the Rhine. "Besides, who could seize the government after Nero," said people, "when almost every descendant of the godlike Augustus had perished under his rule?" Others, looking at the colossus, representing him as a Hercules, involuntarily imagined that no strength could break such a power. There were even some who longed for him from the time he went to Achaea, for Helius and Politetes, to whom he had left the government of Rome and Italy, ruled more bloodily than Nero.

Nobody was certain of his life and property. The law ceased to protect. Human dignity and virtue died out, family bonds became loose, and the debased hearts did not dare to admit hope. From Greece came news of unheard triumphs of Caesar, of thousands of crowns which he won, and of thousands of competitors whom he conquered. The world seemed one orgy, bloody and buffoon-like, but at the same time a conviction was impressed that the end of virtue and dignified things had arrived, that the time of dancing, music, dissolution and blood had come, and that life from now on must flow thus. Caesar himself, to whom the rebellion opened a road for new pillaging, did not pay much attention to the revolting legions and Vindex, and even expressed his joy on account of this. He did not wish to leave Achaea either, and only when Helius informed him that a longer delay might cause him the loss of his empire, he started for Neapolis. -

There he played and sang again, paying no heed to the news of a more and more threatening order of events. Tygellinus was explaining to him that former rebellions of the legions had no leaders, while at present at its head is a man, descending from the old Aquitanian kings, and besides a famous and experienced warrior. ¹ 'Here," answered Nero, "lam listened to by the Greeks, who alone know how tolisten, and are the only ones worthy of my singing." He said that his first duty was to art and fame. But when at last news reached him that Vindex proclaimed him a poor artist, he started and departed for. Rome. The wounds inflicted upon him by Petronius, which were healed by his sojourn in Greece, opened in his heart anew, and he wished to seek justice at the senate for such an unheard-of wrong.

On the way, seeing a group cast in bronze, representing a Gallic warrior felled by a Roman knight, he considered this a good omen, and since then, if he mentioned the revolting legions and Vindex, it was only to deride them. His entrance to the city surpassed all former events of this kind. He rode in the chariot used by Augustus for his triumphal procession. One arch of the circus was destroyed in order to open the way for the procession. The senate, knights, and countless crowds came to meet him. The walls trembled from shouts: "Welcome Augustus! Welcome Hercules 1" Welcome godlike, the only one, the Olympian, the Pythian, the immortal!" Behind him were carried the wreaths won, the names of the cities in which he triumphed and the names of masters conquered by him, engraved upon tablets. Nero himself was intoxicated with his triumph, and with emotion he asked the Augustians surrounding him: what was the triumph of Julius Caesar compared with this triumph? The thought that anyone of the mortals should dare to raise his hand upon such a master-demigod, could not find room\*in his head. He felt really Olympic and for this sole reason, safe. The enthusiasm and the madness of the crowds excited his own madness And indeed it would, seem in the day of that triumph that not only Caesar and the city, but the entire world had gone mad.

No one could see the abyss under the flowers and piles of wreaths. On the very same evening, however, the columns and walls of the temples were covered with inscriptions, in which the crimes of Caesar were pointed at, threatening him with near vengeance, and deriding him as an artist. Prom mouth to mouth passed the phrase: "He sang till heroused the cocks." Alarming news began to circulate in the city and was growing to monstrous measures. Uneasi-

ness seized the Augustians. The people, in. their uncertainty of the future, dared not to express their wishes of hope, even dared not to feel and think.

He however continued to live in the theater. He was interested by newly invented musical instruments and by a new water-organ, with which trials were made at the Palatine. In his childish mind, incapable of one counsel or action, he imagined that, reaching far into the future, promises of theatrical plays and spectacles will turn away the danger. Those nearest to him, seeing, that instead of looking for means and armies, he cares only for expressions picturing the danger exactly, began to lose their heads. Others however thought that he was only deafening himself and others by the citations, having in his soul fear and uneasiness. And in fact his deeds became feverish. Every day thousands of new intentions passed through his head. At moments he was starting to go and meet the dangers, ordered to load cithers and lutes upon wagons, to arm young female slaves as Amazons, and at the same time to concentrate the armies from the East. At times again he thought that he would suppress the rebellion of the Gallic legions not with war but with singing. And his soul was smiling at this spectacle, which should take place after the mitigation of the soldiers with his song. The legion-soldiers would surround him with tears in their eyes, while he should sing to them an epinicium, after which a golden epoch should begin for him and Rome. At times he called for blood; then again he declared that the viceroyalty of Egypt would suffice for him; he mentioned the fortune-tellers who foretold to him the ruling of Jerusalem, or he was moved tenderly with the thought that he will earn his daily bread as a wandering singer, and the cities and countries will honor not the Caesar, lord of the earth, but a songster, whose equal had not been produced by humanity till then.

And thus he threw himself about, raged, played, sang, changing his intentions, changing citations, changed his own and the w'orld's life into a certain absurd, fantastic and at the same time terrible dream, into a shrieking coursing, composed of pompous expressions, poor verses, groans, tears and blood, and meanwhile the cloud on the west was growing and becoming more powerful every day. The measure was exceeded, the buffoon comedy evidently neared its end.

When the news of Galba and of Hispania, joining the rebellion reached his ears, he fell into rage and fury. He smashed cups, overturned a table at a feast and issued orders, which neither Helins, nor even Tygellinus himself dared to-execute. To exterminate the Galls living in Rome, then incend the city again, let loose all the beasts from the arenaria, and to transfer the capital to Alexandria, seemed to Nero a great deed, astonishing and easy. But already the days of his all powerfullness had passed and even the accessories of his former crimes began to look upon him as upon a madman

The death of Vindex and the dissension of the revolting legions seemed however to turn the seale to his side again. Already new feasts, new triumphs and new decrees were intended for Rome, when on a certain night a messenger came upon a foamiug horse from the camp of the pretorians, announcing that in the very city the soldiers have raised the banner of the rebellion and proclaimed Galba Caesar.

Caesas was sleeping at the time of the messenger's arrival but, awakening, he called in vain for the body-guard, watching during the night at the doors of his chambers. The pair ace was already deserted. Only slaves were plundering in the more distant corners, what could be taken the quickest. But his appearance frightened them, while he wandered alone ahout the house, filling it with shouts of fear and despair.

At last, however, the freedmen: Faon, Spirus and Epaphrodites, came to his assistance. They wished him to flee,, saying that there is not a moment to be lost, but he deceived himself. Suppose he, dressed in mourning should speak to the senate, would the senate resist his tears and his eloquence? Should he employ all his eloquence, his oratory and his ability as an actor, could any One in the world be able to resist him? Would they not at least give him the prefectship of Egypt?

And they being used to flatter, dared not to deny openly, **they** warned him only, that, before he could reach the Forum, the people will tear him to pieces, and threatened him, that if he did not mount the horse at once, then they would de-

sert him too.

Faon offered him shelter in his villa, located beyond the Nomentanian gate. After a while they mounted, horses and, covering their heads with eioilks, they set forward toward the: QUO VADIS. 629

edges of the city. The night was becoming pale. A movement, however, prevailed upon the streets, showing the moment to be extraordinary. Soldiers, either singly or in small detachments were over the town. Near the camp Caesar's horse sprang suddenly to the side seeing a corpse. Then the mantle slipped off from the horseman's head, and a soldier who passed by at the same time, recognized the emperor, but confused by the unexpected meeting, he gave Nero the military salute. Passing by the pretorian camp they heard thundering shouts in honor of Galba. Nero understood at last that the hour of his death approaches. Terror and reproaches of conscience seized him. He said that he sees before him a darkness in the form of a black cloud, while from that cloud faces are emerging toward him, in which he recognizes his mother, his wife and his brother. His teeth chattered from terror, and still his soul of a comedian found a certain charm in the danger of the moment. To be the allpowerful lord of the earth and to loose all seemed the pinnacle of tragedy.to him. And true to himself, he played in it the first part to the end. Afever of citations possessed him and a passionate desire, that those present should remember them for posterity. At times he spoke, that he wanted to die, and called for Spiculus, who most dexterously killed all the gladiator. At times he declaimed: "Mother, wife, father call me to death!" From time to time, however, gleams of hope were awakening in him, vain and childish. He knew that death was coming and he did not believe in it at the same time.

They found the Nomentanian Gate open. Riding on they passed by the Ostrianum, where Peter taught and baptized. By the dawn they were in Faon's villa.

There the freedman did not hide from him any longer, that it was time to die, therefore he ordered them to dig a grave for him, and he laid down on the earth, in order that they might take the exact measure. But terror seized him at the sight of the earth shoveled up. His fat face became pale, while upon his forehead drops of sweat stood like drops of the morning dew. He began to delay He declared in the voice of an actor and trembling at the same time, that the moment had not arrived yet, then he began to recite. Finally he begged to be burned, 'What an artist perishes I' repeating as if with amazement.

Meanwhile a messenger of Faon arrived with the announcement, that the senate issued the sentence, and that the "parricida," should be punished according to the old law.

"What law is it?" asked Nero with whitened lips.

¹ 'They will seize thy neck in a fork and will flog thee to death, and will throw thy body in the Tiber, " answered Epaphrodités roughly. Nero opened the cloak upon his. breast.

"It is time, then I" he said looking toward the sky.

And he repeated once more: "What an artist is perishing!"

At the same moment the clatter of horses feet were heard. The centurion at the head of the soldiers was coming after-the head of Ahenobarbus.

"Hurry!" cried the freedmen.

Nero placed a knife to his neck, but he pricked himself only with a timid hand and it was evident, that he would never have courage to drive in the blade. Suddenly Epaphrodites pushed his hand and the knife entered up to the hilt, while his eyes stood out, horrible, immense, terrified.

"I bring thee life!" shouted the centurion entering.
"Too late!" answerd Nero in a hoarse voice.

Then he added:

"This is faithfulness!"

Death began to embrace him. Blood from the thick neck spurted upon the garden flowers with a black stream. Hisfeet began to kick the earth and he died.

The faithful Acte wrapped his body on the followingmorning into costly stuffs and burned him upon a funeral

pile covered with perfumes.

And thus passed Nero, as passes a hurricane, tempest, fire, war or plague, but even now the Basilica of Peter rules from

the Vatician heights over the city and the world.

Near the former Bapenian G-ate to-day there is a small chapel with an almost obliterated inscription: Quo vadis Domine?

(end)

BIBLIOTHECO

